

News from the colony

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

SWISS CLUB MANCHESTER

On the 5th February, the Swiss Club of Manchester had the great pleasure to welcome two young Swiss Artists, Annette Weisbrod, piano, and Walter Grimmer, cello, on a concert-tour in the North of England. We were certainly most thankful to them for their willingness to play for us.

We all know Annette Weisbrod, who some years ago gave us a Musical Evening and who already had a most imposing record of concert appearances in England and on the Continent. As a matter of fact, after completing her studies at the Conservatoires of Zurich and Basle, under the tutorship of such great names as Adrian Aeschbacher, Paul Baumgartner and Klaus Linder, she made her *début* at the Wigmore Hall, London, in 1960.

Walter Grimmer was for us a newcomer, but we know that he studied at the Conservatoire of Zurich and was a pupil of R. Sturzenegger and Maurice Gendron. He is a member of the Berne String Quartet and the Camerata Berne, being a very accomplished cellist.

Some of our members and friends met them in the foyer of the Midland Hotel in a most happy and homely atmosphere to have dinner together, after which we moved to the concert room. There we met an imposing and friendly audience, our Consul and Madame Brunner being present, and it must have been a most gratifying sight for our young artists.

It was a happy moment for our President when he introduced them to our friends, and the next and most important part of our evening filled us with great joy and admiration, leaving everybody spellbound.

The programme consisted of a great, and may I say very happy, selection of works by Brahms, Schumann, Bartok, Halffter and Francaix and time passed much too quickly for us, as unfortunately all good things do, but we hope that not in the too distant future we may hear them again. This wish was most eloquently and heartily expressed by our good friend Laurence Themans, who admirably interpreted the feelings of us all. Cornelia, the lovely daughter of our Consul, presented the Lady-Artist with a bouquet of flowers after which we retired to well-earned refreshments.

Let me finish by just quoting a few words which appeared in one of our Northern Papers and which explain so well the inner-values of these two Artists to whom we wish a happy, bright and successful future:

"Annette has a natural aptitude for producing an ethereal tone which just seems to float from the piano as though there were no piano there at all as a material something for producing an abstract something: in this case, music."

"Walter, too, made his cello "sing" and produced tone as though he were creating harmony from out of beyond rather than from an instrument."

"These two young people are more than musicians, they are artistes of refinement and considerable versatility."

E.B.

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THE SWISS AMBASSADOR ON "THE PRESENCE OF SWITZERLAND IN ENGLAND IN 1964"

On Thursday, 11th February, the Swiss Ambassador and Madame B. de Fischer gave a reception at the Embassy to a large number of leading personalities in the life of the Swiss Colony, office holders in Swiss organisations, business and professional men and women.

The Ambassador read an interesting paper on the activities of the Swiss community in G.B. during 1964, covering every aspect of economic, social, patriotic, political, educational and cultural life. The Ambassador's findings have particular value this year when the theme of the Assembly of the Swiss Abroad in August will probably be "la présence de la Suisse à l'étranger". A final decision will be taken at the next meeting of the Commission of the Swiss Abroad in Berne on 6th March when the Swiss Colony in Great Britain will be represented by Mrs. Mariann Meier and Dr. H. B. Knuchel. Monsieur de Fischer's paper will be referred to in the S.O. later in the year.

THE ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB

The Swiss Alpine Club, which celebrated its Centenary last year, was founded only six years after the Alpine Club itself. It dates, therefore, from the great era of first ascents of Swiss peaks, which reached its zenith in Edward Whymper's ascent of the Matterhorn in 1865. At this period the Swiss were only beginning to look on mountaineering as a sport, and many of their great peaks fell to British climbers.

This continued interest of British climbers in the Alps led to the proposal by a group of them in 1909 that a Section of the Swiss Alpine Club should be formed in London. Edward Whymper, who was a member of the Swiss Alpine Club, spoke in support at one of their dinners.

"A great desire was expressed", ran the proposal, "to try and show the gratitude of the British people to the Swiss Alpine Club for all they have done for mountaineering in Switzerland. . . . Our object would be to bring into the Club all those climbers and lovers of the Alps who do not at present belong to it, and out of our own funds and voluntary subscriptions to present one or more Alpine huts to your Club".

Although not actually a Section, the Association of British Members was formed in December 1909. Sufficient funds were raised to enable a hut to be built near Saas Fee within three years. It was named the Britannia Hut and opened in 1912.

Today, the Association numbers over 800 members. Its activities include a climbing Meet each year at Easter in this country and an Alpine Meet in the Summer, quite apart from monthly lectures and an Annual Dinner. Many famous names are among its members and this illustrates the special link that exists between British and Swiss Climbers — fittingly symbolised at the Centenary Dinner last year, when Dr. Wyss-Dunant (then President of the Swiss Alpine Club) and Sir John Hunt sat down together, both having conquered Everest.