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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

CHURCHES CHRISTMAS PROGRAMME: *French-speaking Parish.* Souper des Doyens on Saturday, 7th December from 5 p.m. Sunday, 15th December: Fête de Noel. Christmas Day: Service at 11.15 a.m. *German-speaking Protestant and Catholic parishes:* Sunday, 22nd December, 4 p.m.: Ecumenical Family Christmas Gathering at the Eglise Suisse. Tuesday, 24th December, 18.30 p.m.: Ecumenical Christmas Celebration at the John Southworth Centre. Midnight Mass with English local residents. Possibility to stay in premises overnight. 31st December, 18.30: Ecumenical Service at the John Southworth Centre. New Year's Eve vigil.

COLONY CHILDREN FETE: Saturday, 4th January, 1975. 2 p.m. at St. Mary Hall. YMCA Central Club. 16-22 Gt. Russell Street, London WC1. All children in the Colony welcome. Parents who are not on the mailing list please contact the organiser, Miss Elizabeth Hoffmann de Visme. Tel: 01-348 1156.

SCHWEIZERBUND (SWISS CLUB) 31st December, 20.30 for 21.00. Dinner at Bertorelli's Restaurant, 19 Charlotte Street (1st floor) London W.1.

ANGLO-SWISS SOCIETY, Stationers' Hall, Ludgate Hill, E.C.4. Wednesday, 11th December at 6 p.m. Mr. W. A. de Vigier, Chairman of Acrow (Engineers) Ltd. will give a lecture entitled *Experiences in Modern Management.* There will be an opportunity for discussion followed by a buffet supper. Members may bring guests. Charge inclusive of wine is £4.50 a head.

CERCLE GENEVOIS: Escalade Meeting at Watford on Friday, 13th December. Numbers limited. Will all those desiring details on transport (or who can offer transport) please write to Michael Metford-Sewell, 386 Chiswick High Road, London W4 5TH. Tel (evenings) 01-948 2425.

SWISS CLUB MANCHESTER: Saturday, 14th December, Christmas Party at Ciba Geigy (UK) Ltd. Heald Green. Thursday, 30th January, 1975, Raclette Party at the Cottons Hotel, near Knutsford.

SWISS CLUB EDINBURGH. Samichlaus-Abig on Friday, 6th December, 8 p.m. at 112 Hanover Street.

CITY SWISS CLUB: Christmas Dinner on Tuesday, 17th December, 6.30 for 7 p.m. at the Dorchester.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY. Annual Dinner and Dance, Dorchester Hotel, Saturday, 1st February, 1975.

SWISS CLUB LIVERPOOL: Christmas Dinner Party, Saturday, 7th December, 7.30 p.m. at the Dresden Hotel, New Chester Road, Bromborough.

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UNION TICINESE DI LONDRA Centenary Celebrations

The Celebration Dinner was to take place on 17th February, but due to the miners' strike, three-day week and power restrictions, it was postponed to Sunday, 20th October. 200 members and friends met at the Cardinal Manning School in Kensington. After a Reception, the party assembled for dinner in the School's Hall gaily decorated in blue and red, the colours of the Ticino. Colourful interest was created also by sunny Ticino posters, the Swiss Cantonal flags, flowers and illuminated certificates. At one end was the platform on which a lively band, under Mario Fiorentini, played old and new popular tunes. At the other end hung the impressive banner of the Watermen's and Lightermen's Union of Greenwich with the picture of Cardinal Manning (born in 1808 in Hertfordshire), a former High Churchman who later joined the Church of Rome, became Archbishop of Westminster and Cardinal. He was an author and intensely interested in working class people. His hope of founding a Roman Catholic University never materialised, but he started the Teachers' Training College, bombed in the war, on whose site the Cardinal Manning School now stands.

Its headmaster is none other than Francesco De Maria, President of the Unione Ticinese, the 29th in a succession of able and distinguished men who have made the Unione Ticinese a force to be reckoned with in the London Swiss community. The strength of the Unione lies not least in its ability to keep the younger generations interested. Witness: the great-granddaughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Carlo Berti, a pretty young girl, present at the Centenary.

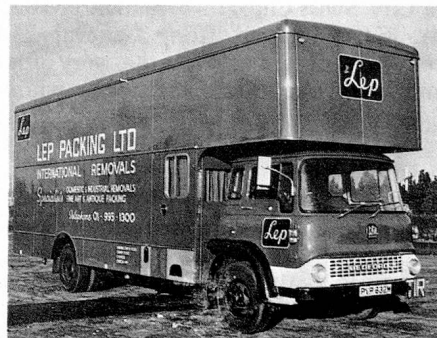
The Apostolic Delegate, The Very Reverend Archbishop Heim, said grace, and an excellent dinner was then served by diligent waiters and waitresses ably assisted by senior boys of the School. The meal was Ticinese in character, including *antipasto*, *minestrone*, succulent chicken and *risotto alla Nostrana*, accompanied



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by smooth *Soave* and the best of Ticino *Merlot* wines. The beautifully decorated Centenary cake made (in triplicate as it were) by Mr. Bozzini, followed fruit salad and ice-cream.

After the loyal toasts, the President welcomed the guests, first and foremost the Apostolic Delegate. As many of those present knew but little Italian, the President soon switched over to English, and with eloquence and humour he related the difficulties attending the organisation of the Centenary Dinner. Mr. De Maria said he had been staggered by the enormous support he got from every corner, not least the other Swiss societies, and he had come to realise in how much respect the *Unione* was being held by the Swiss community.

He welcomed the Swiss Ambassador, Dr. Albert Weitnauer, and praised the help, interest and care he and the Embassy always gave the Society. Next he greeted Consul-General and Mrs. Adams and Consul and Mrs. Reutlinger, both couples much respected friends of the *Unione*. Then he went back to the 'fifties in his welcome of Dr. and Mrs. Albertini and Dr. and Mrs. Lepori, who had been at the Swiss Embassy for a number of years and had taken a particular interest in the activities of the Ticinesi. How well members remembered them was shown by vivid applause.

The President then mentioned apologies received from many friends and well-wishers at home, such as the President of "Pro Ticino" Dr. Rotanzi. In his place he welcomed Dr. and Mrs. Perazzi. Apologies had also been received from a Past President of the Ticinese Government, Dr. Lafranchi. Congratulatory telegrams included one from the President of the Commission of the Swiss Abroad, Dr. Louis Guisan, and the Director of the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad in Berne, Mr. Marcel Ney.

Next he turned to the Colony. Without exception, Mr. De Maria said, they had sent good wishes and much joy. The Federation of Swiss Societies in the U.K. was represented by its President and Mrs. Simon. He remembered them well from his visit to the Manchester Swiss Club and the "Landsgemeinde" at Hebden Bridge.

The Chairman next welcomed Mr. and Mrs. Tangemann, President of one of the oldest Swiss organisations in London, the City Swiss Club. Its President in 1875 (Mr. Ed. Roehrich from Geneva) had been present already at the very first anniversary. Another society with whom relations had always been close, not least during the war years, the Swiss Mercantile Society, whose President and Mrs. Jaccard were welcomed with special thanks for a marvellous birthday present in the form of a bursary to a young Ticinese to study at the S.M.S. College in London for 3 months.

The next guest on the President's list of welcomes was the President of the *Nouvelle Société Helvétique*, Mrs. Mariann Meier, who was there also as a member in her own right, as Delegate on

the Commission of the Swiss Abroad in Berne and, exceptionally also as press reporter for the *Swiss Observer* whose Editor was unable to attend. The Swiss Catholic Mission was represented by Mr. and Mrs. Kaeufeler in place of the President and Mrs. Grob. Father Bossard, unable to come on a Sunday, had asked the Apostolic Delegate, at one time Secretary to Pope John, to attend the Centenary.

The Swiss Benevolent Society's President, Mr. Schneebeli, was unable to come, but the S.B.S. was represented by its Secretary Mrs. Sharp and her husband. A very warm welcome was extended to Mr. Oscar Boehringer and his wife Ildé, née Meschini, both patrons and benefactors as her father, President in 1910 and 1915, had been before them. The last guest welcomed was Mr. Harry Vardon who had for many years led the band playing at the *Unione's* famous tea dances at the Dorchester, alas now a thing of the past.

The first of the guests to reply was the Ambassador. He said he had always been happy in a Ticinese atmosphere, and as a Basle citizen, he had at all times had close ties with the Ticino, as had his city. He had always loved the sounds of the Ticinese dialect. Foreign observers marvelled how the Swiss could live together happily with such diversity. But we Swiss, said the Ambassador, always stressed that it was *because of* and *not despite* the differences. Dr. Weitnauer referred to his ties with the *Unione* already in the 'fifties when he worked at the then Legation, and when the Leporis introduced him to their compatriots from the South. The Ambassador said that the vitality and ingenuity which characterised the Ticinesi and the *Unione*, were there for all to see, and though it was dangerous to prophesy, he could safely predict a second century just as successful as the first. "I believe in you and the Ticinesi".

The next speaker was one of the eight ever "Socio Benemeriti" of the Society, Mr. Giuseppe Eusebio, President from 1938 to 1943. In his sonorous voice and picturesque Italian, he went over the history of the *Unione*, a century of pain, trouble, misery and glory. He described some of the immigrants from the Ticino, their struggles in Great Britain, country of industry and commerce. Many did not even know English. He talked about the successful development of the *Unione* right into the first world war and referred to famous names in the annals of the Society. He reminded members of many well-known restaurants and other businesses in London and elsewhere and mentioned some outstanding members present, including some ladies. He singled out Mr. Oscar Boehringer, son of the founder of the *Swiss Observer* who had served the Swiss community by carrying on his father's legacy. Finally he expressed his conviction that the *Unione* would thrive for a second century.

Dr. Albertini, also in Italian, spoke with great emotion about his first links

with the *Unione* when he was Secretary of Legation in London. He had kept his promise when he left, to attend the Centenary Celebration. He then referred to the various presidents who had all contributed to the success of the Society. He compared the changes which had taken place at home with those in the history of the Society. He wished it for its second century the same patriotism and attachment to the Ticino.

Dr. Lepori said (in Italian, too) that as the sixth speaker he found it extremely difficult to say anything which had not been said before. So he would confine himself to saying thank you and to bring greetings and good wishes from the President of the Cantonal Government Councillor Ugo Sadis and the former Federal Councillor Enrico Celio (the first) who had been at the 75th anniversary. Dr. Lepori said that he and his wife had not been back to London since they left 20 years ago, but had never forgotten how they were introduced to the *Unione* and its *Corale* in which they assisted. He expressed their good wishes with a quotation by the famous Federal Councillor Giuseppe Motta.

One of the Vice-Presidents, Mrs. Claudia Polti, prominent member of the Women's Section, was the last speaker. She became the first Secretary when the "Sezione Femile" was founded in 1939 and Mrs. Lunghi-Rezzonico became its first President. She recalled the sad losses, some of the members suffered in the war and how Mrs. Augusta Berti carried on during some difficult times. She became the only Lady "Socio Benemerito". The ladies were of great help to the *Corale*. She hoped the new generation would continue the work of the *Unione* and remember some of the sacrifices which had been made in the past in order to carry on.

The President had the last word, speaking once more in English. He did not apologise for so much Italian — it was, after all, the *Unione Ticinese's* day. He then proposed from the chair, thus doing away with all tradition, that Mr. Pietro Jacomelli, Vice-President, and President of the Society from 1954 to 1965, should be made the ninth "Socio Benemerito" of the *Unione*. His proposal was accepted by warm acclamation.

Mr. de Maria then introduced the Choir. He regretted that its strength was not as it used to be, documented by many photographs on the wall. But many of the stalwarts who had sung in the *Corale's* heydays were among the group on the stage, and Maestro Luigi Bruni's accordion sounded as impressive as ever. The audience joined in the singing, and the final song was the first performance of the special Centenary Song with words and music by Vittorio Castelnuovo. It recalls the homeland with nostalgia and states that however grand and beautiful this town of London, it cannot compare with the faraway homeland where the Ticinesi's hearts will remain.

Thus came to an end a Centenary Celebration which will remain in the

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memory of all those who had the privilege to partake. Some of them – the writer included – were at the 75th anniversary on Sunday, 23rd October 1949, at the Dorchester Hotel. Then it was dinner jackets and all the trimmings of a banquet. This time it was informal, but the atmosphere was truly splendid, patriotic in a way which is rare today, yet mingled with respect for the country which has given hospitality to the Ticinesi for centuries. It may have been a coincidence, but a significant one: the same evening as the celebrations took place, the result of the plebiscite on “over-foreignisation” in Switzerland was announced. The people had rejected the stringent and inhumane proposals, and this may be a good omen for our Ticinesi compatriots in London for a safe, happy and prosperous second century.

M.M.

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Mr. and Mrs. A. Jaccard will have their wedding anniversary on 12th December (1931).

Mr. F. Burri will be 62 on 2nd December, and Mrs. W. Renz will have her birthday on 3rd December. Mr. M. Ehsam will be 78 on the 14th of the month, and Mrs. F. Delaloye will have her 87th birthday on 15th December.

Congratulations and many happy returns to all our readers who will be celebrating birthdays and anniversaries shortly.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY-LONDON

INAUGURAL CEREMONY - 1st NOVEMBER 1974

Friday, 1st November, was a veritable red-letter day in the annals of the Society and its College. Swiss House was officially reopened after building operations extending well over a year. The work undertaken had resulted not only in the enlargement of the buildings, but also in their partial reconstruction and complete renovation.

The formal ceremony of cutting a ribbon at the entrance was performed by Dr. F. Leutwiler, President of the Swiss National Bank.

In the presence of the Swiss Ambassador, Dr. A. Weitnauer, numerous guests from Switzerland and England, members of the Society, teachers and students of the College, the Mayor of the London Borough of Camden, Councillor Mrs. F. Parnell, then unveiled the plaque commemorating this auspicious occasion.

In a short address, she mentioned that the S.M.S. had been at Swiss House for nearly 50 years and formed part of the cosmopolitan population of her Borough. She praised the good work being done by the College in acquainting young people from Switzerland not only with the English language, but also with British life and institutions. In this way, the College was making a valuable contribution to the fostering of friendship between the two nations.

After having been shown over the building, members and guests were conveyed by coach to the Dorchester Hotel in Park Lane, where a luncheon party had been arranged.

In welcoming the guests, the Chairman, Mr. A. Jaccard, expressed appreciation to the Mayor of Camden for having graced the occasion with her presence. He thanked the Ambassador and his collaborators for their interest in the Society's activities and their constant support.

He extended cordial greetings to the Swiss contingent, including Dr. Fritz Leutwiler, President, Swiss National Bank, Fürsprecher Hans Dellsperger, Vize-Direktor BIGA, Berne, Mr. Richard Maiër-Neff, President S.K.V., Dr. A. Rossi, Secretary, Association of Zurich Credit Institutes, National Councillor Hans Rüegg, President of Association Patronale suisse des Constructeurs de Machines et Industriels en Métallurgie and Dr. D. Aebli, Manager (ditto), former National Councillor A. Favre-Bulle and Madame Favre-Bulle, Mr. Robert Moser, Vice-President S.K.V., Mr. Otto Müller, Central Secretary, S.K.V., Mr. Eduard Ruchti, Central Secretary S.K.V. and Mrs. Ruchti.

Among the English guests were Miss D. G. L. Wynn-Cornish, Bursar, Bedford

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