

# British week at the "Hospes" exhibition in Berne

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## BRITISH WEEK AT THE "HOSPES" EXHIBITION IN BERNE

The "British Week" at the "Hospes" Exhibition (Swiss Tourism and International Cookery Exhibition) fixed to take place from May 20th to 26th, 1954, in Berne, really and truly started already on Wednesday, May 19th, when the members of the British National Team, official representatives and the Press assembled at the London Airport of Heathrow to fly direct to the Swiss capital.

Having in recent issues of this paper repeatedly referred to this unique Exhibition which is now taking place (May 14th—June 21st), representing a cross section of Swiss Tourist Traffic, of its origin, history and economic importance to our country, and to the art of international cooking in general, both so closely associated with the Tourist Trade, I need not enlarge further on this subject, but will recall the fact that an English National Team of Chefs, as well as other British Exhibitors had accepted at the time an invitation from the organisers of this Exhibition not only to compete in the cookery section but also to exhibit their wares at this, what may be termed "Gastronomic Olympiade".

As I have been asked to accompany this "National Team" on their journey to Berne, I will confine myself to describe their doings and report their attainments. Space unfortunately does not allow me to give an exhaustive description of this well planned and most interesting Exhibition which I can heartily recommend to all those of my readers who are visiting Switzerland previous to June 21st. I am sure they will not be disappointed.

The party which was to represent Great Britain consisted of the following: Arthur Hope (Chef d'Equipe) Maitre Chef des Cuisines Treganna, Castle Hotel, St. Ives (Cornwall), A. R. Cusick, Group Catering Officer (12 hospitals) of the Royal Free Hospital, E. W. Morrell, Chef de Cuisine at the Devonshire Club, London, L. Nice, Chief Instructor at the Technical Municipal College (Portsmouth), J. A. Potterton, Chief Confectioner at Kunzle's, Birmingham, and F. C. Richbell, Larder Chef at the Dorchester Hotel, London.

They were joined by three members of the Jury: J. W. Bongers, well-known former Chef, Hotelier and Restaurateur, E. Käufeler, Maitre Chef des Cuisines at the Dorchester Hotel, London, and Mr. L. A. Howe, Chef of the Public Schools Club, London, Chairman of the English section of the International Academy of Chefs de Cuisine.

Official representatives were: Mr. C. A. Juriens, President of the International Academy of Chefs de Cuisine and Association of Cooks in Great Britain, Maitre Chef de Cuisine at the Caledonian Club, London. Mr. W. Bachmann, Chairman of the British Organising Committee for the "British Week", at the International Cookery Exhibition.

As individual exhibitors travelled: S. A. Finch, Head Patissier and Confectioner at Lyons (Strand Corner House), London, and four other representa-

tives and observers from the trade: Mrs. S. Erickson, Miss Larnder, Mr. Hendry and Mr. Hicks.

In addition the following accompanied the team: Wing Commander C. L. Moyes, as the official representative of the Royal Air Force, the latter being an exhibitor, A. Widmer Restaurateur, and A. Stauffer, Editor of the "Swiss Observer", London.

London's busy Air Port was bathed in golden sunshine on the day of our departure, and the twin engine aircraft, HB—IRC of Swissair which was to take us to our destination looked as handsome as ever amongst the other assembled air-liners of many nations ready to depart to distant lands.

To bid us *bon voyage* was Mr. W. Wyler, General Manager for Great Britain and Eire of Swissair, accompanied by members of his staff. He promised us what he smilingly called an "egg landing," and I am pleased to say that his promise was well kept. It was most important that a smooth landing should be effected in view of the fact that the very fragile cargo of over 60 exhibits in sugar, marzipan, chocolates, etc., was carried in the same machine. That not one of all the many exhibits suffered the slightest damage speaks well for Swissair.

After having been photographed from all angles, and introduced to the pilot, Mr. Wiedmer, we boarded the plane, the engines began to roar, and after a surprisingly short run we became air-borne.

On crossing over the Channel, our charming air hostess, Mlle. Moser, acquainted us with the news that an apéritif generously offered by "Swissair" would be served, an announcement which was obviously greeted with warm applause, this was followed by an excellent cold luncheon complete with red and white wine and coffee.

The journey so far proved uneventful, at least to those, who like the writer, have flown many times over the same route. Perhaps the only innovation for your reporter was the fact, that suddenly, and without any warning "speech-making" was introduced.

Having to listen patiently to a good many speeches throughout the year on *terra firma*, this came somewhat as a shock to me, and goes to prove that not even between "heaven and earth" one can escape this ordeal. Fortunately our air-hostess had previously asked me to empty my fountain pen in case it should begin to leak owing to air pressure in the cabin, and I was, therefore, unable to make copious notes of what was said. God bless her!

Mr. Bachmann, started the ball rolling, with a startling and sensational announcement, to the effect, that shortly before our departure, he had been handed a cheque of £100 from an anonymous donor, towards the cost of sending a British team to Berne.

This news was greeted with much applause and promptly celebrated with an extra round of drinks. Stimulants of one sort or another are always encouraging and without further ado four more members

of the party gave an exhibition of their oratorical capabilities. All speakers expressed the hope that the National Team as well as the individual exhibitors would meet with success at the Berne Exhibition, thanking Mr. Bachmann, the Chairman of the British Organising Committee, for his efforts and generous financial support in getting an *equipe* to participate at the Hospes Exhibition.

Whilst the "Stimmung" in the cabin slowly rose, almost dimming the noise of the engines, weather conditions "outside" somewhat deteriorated. On passing over St. Quentin at an altitude of 7,500 feet and a speed of 185 m.p.h., heavy and threatening clouds appeared and the visibility became almost nil. Doubts were expressed about the safety of some of the fragile exhibits in case we should experience some buffeting. However, the pilot, promptly took the machine out of the clouds into glorious sunshine high above the forbidding clouds.

The bulletin of the flight-captain handed around, indicated that we were approaching Belfort and would land in Berne at 2.50 p.m., this was however, premature, as shortly afterwards we were informed by the stewardess, that an intermediary landing would have to be effected at Geneva, as owing to compass and radio troubles, the pilot was unable to keep in touch with the airport in Berne. This *détour*, however did not cause any alarm, and an excellent landing was made at Geneva's Airport of Cointrin.

After a delay of about two hours, during which the troubles were attended to, we boarded the plane again, and half an hour later smoothly landed at the Belp airport none the worse for the deviation.

Owing to the late arrival (6 o'clock instead of 2.30 p.m.), the "Empfangs Komitee" which was to welcome their British visitors had departed (the Bernese are after all not so slow), and we were taken by coach to our Headquarters at the Hotel Bristol. After a quick wash and brush up we paid our first visit to the Exhibition where a dinner at the International Restaurant awaited us. There was still much work to be done for some members of the party, as all the exhibits had to be unpacked and got ready for the opening, the next day of the "British Week".

\* \* \*

The "British Week" started the following day (Thursday, May 20th) and was favoured by fine weather. The British team of Chefs had to report at an early hour to the kitchens of the International Restaurant, as for the next three days they were taking part in the "National Dishes Competition" providing three luncheons and two dinners, the Menus of which were carefully chosen beforehand: it might interest my readers to learn what they consisted of:

#### Luncheons.

Cold Eggs Nell Gwynne, Panned Fried Brighton Plaice with Golden Butter, Roast Ribs of Devon Beef, Yorkshire Pudding, Grated Horseradish Sauce, Spring Cabbage, Roast Potatoes, Mince Pies, Syllabub, Caephilly and Stilton Cheese.

Cockie Leekie, Cold Scotch Salmon, Deptford See. Cucumber, Canterbury Lamb Cutlets, Grilled Buttered Chive Potatoes, New Carrots, Apple Pie and Cream, Variety of English Cheeses.

Bouquet of Cold Norfolk Asparagus, Grilled Hali-but Steak with Shrimp Butter, Hot Chicken Pie, Buttered Leaf Spinach, Mint New Potatoes, Aunt Sally Pudding, Assorted English Cheeses.

#### Dinners.

Smoked Scotch Salmon, Devilled Southend White-bait and Lemon, Roast Aylesbury Duckling, Apple Sauce, Young New Peas, Roast Potatoes, Veal, Ham and Egg Pie, Salad, Topsy Cake, Strawberry Ice, Country Cheeses.

Real Turtle Soup, Fried Dover Sole, Gherkin Sauce, Fried Potatoes, Roast Yorkshire Moor Grouse, Dwarf Bean Salad, Findon Haddie and Poached Egg, Strawberry Shortcake with Vanilla Ice, Farmhouse Cheese.

To provide for these Luncheons and Dinners 1,200 lbs. of raw materials were required to cook these typically British National Dishes. The material was transported in another Swissair machine direct to Zurich from whence it was taken by lorry straight to the refrigerators at the exhibition.

How often have we heard that British cooking is inferior to the cooking of almost any other country, well, all I can say is, that all the dishes available were "sold out" in no time and greatly enjoyed. Many of the visitors to the International Restaurant voiced their disappointment to me at not having been able to taste "English cooking", double the quantities could have easily been sold, but this was outside the control of the team as the Exhibition Authorities had stipulated the number of portions to be served.

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Shortly before noon, amidst great excitement, the Police Pipe Band from Glasgow arrived preceded by the " Berner Bereitermusik " the former numbered 24 six footers dressed in their kilts, sporrans and tartans and wearing the traditional Scottish head dress.

Their bag-pipes evoked the admiration especially of the youngsters, many of whom, no doubt, had never before seen or heard these instruments. A little girl, dressed in Bernese costume shyly stepped forward and presented the Scottish band-master with a bouquet of flowers, and was promptly lifted up by the latter and kissed on both cheeks much to her surprise.

Meanwhile H.M.'s British Ambassador, Sir Lionel Lamb, accompanied by Lady Lamb, and members of the Embassy staff had arrived, and were received by Mr. F. Krähenbühl, President of the Organisation Committee, Mr. Wymann and other officials. The members of the British Delegation were then separately introduced by Mr. W. Bachmann to the Ambassador and Lady Lamb.

The Bernese band then played the British National Anthem, and amidst complete silence, everybody standing bareheaded and to attention, the Union Jack was hoisted and the " British Week " was officially opened.

Sir Lionel, and his party were now conducted to the Pavilion of the " Internationale Kochkunst Ausstellung " where the individual exhibits of the British were on show. These exhibits occupied the centre part of the large Hall and were most artistically displayed. Without any exaggeration I can truly

say, that the exhibits on this large centre piece proved to be the principal attraction, it was almost impossible to get near it.

Special attention and admiration was given to a wedding cake exhibited by Mr. Rock, who has the reputation of being one of the foremost cake decorators in the world, no less admired were the exhibits of Mr. Finch, Head Patissier and Confectioner at J. Lyons & Co. Ltd., London, showing a beautiful Sugar Basket and Flowers, Sugar Swan and Fruit, ornamental casket with chocolates. High praise also were bestowed on the following exhibits by Mr. Thomson (Christmas Cake, Birthday Cakes), Mr. Waterfield (Birthday and Christmas Cakes and Marzipan Ensembles), Mr. Childs (Basket with Marzipan Roses). Mr. Schurs, modelled exhibit " Three Chefs " was most original and special attention was focussed on it. In the same class of excellent exhibits were the following: Mr. Siggers (two pictures with freehand piped figures), Mr. Redfern (a display of sugar flowers), Mr. Adams (two chocolate novelty eggs, two Marzipan exhibits, Kitten and Puppy, one moulded rabbit in colours), Mr. Cusick (contemporary centre piece " Flying Saucer, and three D).

The exhibits of the Cardiff Technical College of various cakes, assorted gateaux and iced-cake tops were much admired. An equally fine display was presented by the Royal Air Force, London, outstanding amongst the twenty show pieces being the following: cake with R.A.F. Crest, Hunting Scene, Anne Hathaway's Cottage, Bowl of Flowers, and Roundabout in Pastillage.

The Jury awarded to these individual and collective exhibitors, twelve Gold Medals and one Bronze Medal, further awards have been made for which Diplomas will be issued. Considering the very high standard of exhibits of the many countries competing in this class the result can be called first-class, and shows that British confectioners are in the fore front of their profession.

Sir Lionel Lamb expressed great satisfaction when informed of the result, and personally congratulated some of the exhibitors who were present. He also paid a visit to the kitchens, where the British Chefs were introduced to him and he warmly complimented them on their achievements.

No less successful were the British National Team of Chefs, each of them receiving a Gold Medal covering twenty-four dishes.

At one of the dinners, Mr. Pauli, President of the Jury, when handing over to the team the six Gold Medals, remarked that this result exceeded all expectation, considering the long period of rationing in this country when one could have expected, that the art of cooking would have been almost lost. No better tribute could have been paid to British Chefs.

Owing to pressure of work I had unfortunately to leave Berne already on Monday, after a visit of five days, I was therefore unable to attend the official Dinner offered by the Exhibition authorities at the Café du Théâtre to the British Equipe, nor was I able to be present at the luncheon offered to the British Air Attaché, Wing-Commander Scott at the Grill room in the International Restaurant, I also missed an excursion which was offered by Hospes to the Kursaal at Interlaken. My erstwhile travelling



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companions, however, have since informed me that never before in their lives had they to listen to so many speeches and drink so much wine. I can truly sympathise with them. After all the many festivities I understand, that a little farewell luncheon was held at the Hotel Bristol in Berne, the Headquarters of the delegation, and shortly afterwards the party returned by Swissair to London.

The participation of a British team of Chefs and individual exhibitors at Hospes has been an undeniable success, in every respect, and I heartily congratulate the organiser and instigator of the party, Mr. W. Bachmann, and each member on their fine achievement, the former especially has tackled a tremendous task, and can rightly claim a big share in the success so brilliantly obtained.

There existed throughout the stay a wonderful team spirit, marred by no unpleasant incidents, everyone gave his best and worked exceedingly hard for the *ensemble*.

This, alas, only too short trip in the company of some of the giants in the cookery and confectionery profession will always remain a treasured memory. It has proved to me that this country need not despair as to the state of British Cooking and Confectionery, they are as good as any of their colleagues from abroad.

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Jean Henri Dunant, the son of a Swiss merchant, was born in Geneva, Switzerland on May 8, 1828. In 1859 he travelled on a business trip to Solferino in Northern Italy, where he hoped to see Napoleon III of France, but the appointment was never kept. The battle of Solferino was raging, between the forces of France and Sardinia and those of Austria.

After 15 hours of fighting more than 40,000 men lay dead or wounded. Dunant was appalled by the complete lack of aid for the wounded and dying and immediately set about organising assistance in a small town nearby. But without resources and trained helpers little could be done to alleviate the suffering.

He described these experiences in three editions of his book *A Memory of Solferino*, which appeared in November, 1862. In the book he also appealed for the founding of aid societies which would care for the wounded in time of war.

Early in 1863 a commission was set up in Switzerland to study the question. Its members were General Dufour, head of the Swiss Army; Gustave Moynier, Henri Dunant, Dr. Louis Appia and Dr. Theodore Maunoir, who became the International Committee of the Red Cross. Later that year 17 countries were invited to take part in a conference in Geneva which resulted in the signing of the Geneva Convention for the treatment of war wounded and prisoners of war.

The convention adopted the red cross as its flag and laid down the principle that it was the duty of a country at war to care for sick and wounded soldiers whatever their creed or nationality and that ambulances, hospitals and members of the Red Cross were to be regarded as neutral.

In 1901 Duant shared in the first Nobel Peace Prize. Nine years later he died.

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