

News from the Colony

Objektyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - **(1963)**

Heft 1435

PDF erstellt am: **09.08.2024**

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

LANDSGEMEINDE

The first time I took part in the "Landsgemeinde" of the Swiss Clubs of Manchester, Leeds and Bradford was two years ago, and it was an experience I shall never forget. I was therefore delighted when an opportunity came along for me to travel to Manchester again this year.

When I woke up on the morning of Sunday, 16th June, the Manchester sky was not only proverbially grey but delivering most generous rain. By the time we arrived at Hebden Bridge, three-quarters of an hour's drive away, the rain had stopped and did not seriously come again all day — indeed by the late afternoon it was sunny.

It had been feared that the bad forecast would keep many members away, but there must have been a good hundred all told. Before we set out on the hour's ramble to Hardcastle Crag the local Council offered us morning coffee.

The Swiss Ambassador and Madame Daeniker had been prevented from coming, but Monsieur and Madame Gallusser brought their greetings. Monsieur Gallusser thanked the Council for their kind welcome, and soon the party, left for the pleasant walk through very attractive countryside. The walk along the river, with its wild and picturesque banks, was a pleasure and on arriving at the crags the meadow reminded us indeed of the Ruetliwiese on the Lake of Lucerne.

A good cross-section of the Swiss Colony of the Midlands was present at this fifteenth "Landsgemeinde", babies in arms and veteran members, young girls on a temporary visit in this country, and well-established scientists and businessmen, gay young bachelors and families with several children.

After a leisurely picnic, which was interspersed with a good deal of speculation as to whether the sun would really come out in earnest or whether the drizzle was going to persist, the actual "Landsgemeinde" took part. Our distinguished compatriot Prof. Jean Inebnit of Leeds told us the history of our country as it evolved through the centuries. He reminded us of the courageous men who founded the Confederation on a meadow in Central Switzerland much like the one we were standing on at the moment. As he mentioned each Canton's entry into the Confederation he called the citizens of that particular Canton to enter the "Ring" until the picture was complete and all the compatriots united. However, Professor Inebnit is not only a good Swiss but also a good world citizen, and he did not forget our English friends nor other nationals present. It was quite moving when the whole assembly sang "Là-haut sur la montagne" and it was indeed like some re-dedication, realising the privilege of belonging to a country such as ours, at the same time also becoming more aware of our obligations towards others.

Professor Inebnit, incidentally, is engaged on a new scheme of his, the experimental preparation centre for volunteers at Charbonnières in France. The "Yorkshire Post" called him "a man of vision with a blueprint for peace". He has always believed in International Voluntary Service, and the movement which was started by our compatriot Pierre Cérésolle has had a staunch supporter in him. At Charbonnières volunteers have reconstructed the disused stables and are being trained in practical skills. They will be offered to FAO and other organisations to support their experts in the field. On the 33 acres of the

Château grounds Prof. Inebnit hopes to create a training centre — possibly even a Pestalozzi children's village.

With a man of such vision and ideals running the Landsgemeinde it is not surprising that those taking part were moved.

Later in the afternoon at tea in the Civic Hall at Hebden Bridge the Chairman of the Rural District Council of Hepton, Councillor Marshall, said in his welcome that we came to Hebden Bridge for food, but it was to Hardcastle Crag that we went for the spiritual uplift, and he could not have put it more accurately. The Chairman of the Royd Urban District Council, Councillor Greenwood, mentioned Prof. Inebnit and his blueprint for peace. Both Councillors, who had been invited with their wives, stressed the value of Anglo-Swiss friendship. Although the active President of the Manchester Swiss Club, Mr. B. Simon, was present, Vice-President Mr. E. Berner welcomed the guests, the Councillors and their ladies, Monsieur and Madame Gallusser of the Swiss Embassy in London, the Swiss Consul in Manchester, Monsieur Rosset, and his wife, and the Editor of the "Swiss Observer".

And so another Landsgemeinde came to an end, and those taking part went away feeling all the better for it. Many an old friendship had been renewed, many a new relationship started. At the risk of repeating myself, I should like to say how much we Swiss in London could learn from our compatriots in the Midlands. I am always happy whenever I attend a meeting of any Swiss Society in London, but when I go to the Midlands Swiss I feel not only at home, but stimulated and stirred. I fail to explain this; perhaps we have it too good in the Metropolis with all its marvellous attractions, and our compatriots up north have to make a greater effort to achieve anything — but whatever the reason, they certainly succeed.

Mariann.

SWISS CLUB MANCHESTER

The National Day Celebration will take place on 1st August at Cottons Hotel, Knutsford, from 8.30 p.m. to 11 o'clock. There will be a coach leaving from Altrincham Railway Station at 8 p.m. The programme begins with "Schüblig und Händöpfelsalat" followed by cakes and coffee. The official part of the Celebration will include an address by the Swiss Consul and the President of the Swiss Club. There will be a bonfire and fireworks. The cost per person, including coach fare, meal and fireworks, will be 8/-. Please apply immediately to the Hon. Secretary, Mr. H. Monney, 327 Wellington Road North, Heaton Chapel, Stockport, Cheshire, who will send you an application form.

CITY SWISS CLUB

Will Members please note that
NO MONTHLY MEETINGS
will be held until September.