

The 16th Landsgemeinde of the Swiss in the North of England

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

AN HISTORIC SETTING FOR THE CITY SWISS CLUB'S SUMMER DANCE

Great Fosters, nineteen miles out of London, is a name that throughout the centuries has been associated with great hospitality. Today it is an hotel of great charm and comfort. Some parts are said to date back to the reign of Henry VII, but the main building was more probably built by Henry VIII who, in confiscating the monastic lands thereabouts, was determined to make for himself a chase where he could indulge in his favourite pastime of hunting. Queen Elizabeth who was equally fond of the chase constantly used Great Fosters as a Hunting Lodge, largely because it was the home of her mother, Anne Boleyn, and James I was so enthusiastic about the sport that he would hunt anything, and once turned out sixty wild pigs in the neighbourhood of Great Fosters for his own amusement.

All these early Tudor Palaces and Hunting Lodges (there were at least thirteen of them when Queen Elizabeth came to the throne) are remarkable for the excellence of their masonry and the elaborateness of their ornamentation. Great Fosters, a show-piece among sixteenth century gems, is rich with every evidence of the period.

There is an oak well staircase which is one of the only two examples left, the other being at Hampton Court Palace. The Arms of Queen Elizabeth's mother who had capricious emblems without number decorate what is now known as Anne Boleyn Room. There is a great fireplace in the lounge, and the fine mantelpieces are particularly worth seeing, some carved in oak and others in stone. The Royal Arms are displayed over the massive oak front door, surmounted by the Arched Tudor Crown, the initials E.R. and the date 1558.

On Great Fosters ceasing to be a Hunting Lodge, there is evidence that in 1602 it was leased to Henry, Ninth Earl of Northumberland. But his tenancy was short lived, for within four years he was arrested on a false charge of treason in connection with the Gunpowder Plot, and for the last sixteen years of his life he languished in the Tower of London.

The Great Fosters annals tell us that the Dodderidge family took over the place from James I, and that later the notoriously unpopular Lord Chief Justice of England, Sir Robert Foster, came into possession. His great-grandson ultimately sold the house to Mr. Wyatt in 1787 — for £700!

This then is Great Fosters, today one of the finest Country House Hotels in Britain, richly and carefully furnished in a style compatible with its Elizabethan character.

What better background could there be for a summer outing than this splendid mansion surrounded by magnificent grounds where for centuries devoted gardeners have with dexterity and love tended the yews, exercised their skill in topiary and rolled and cut, swept and weeded beautiful lawns.

For several years now, the City Swiss Club have chosen Great Fosters for their Summer Dance. This year, on Friday, 3rd July, a lovely summer's evening allowed cocktails to be taken out of doors. This was a perfect opening to the evening's festivities. It was a particular pleasure to consume one's gin and tonic or dry Martini, or even a tomato juice, while strolling around the gardens, under the stately old trees, between sweet-

scented flowerbeds and traversing a Chinese bridge across a stream, a feat which demanded some skill on the part of the ladies wearing stiletto heels!

The dinner took place in the lofty, beamed Tithe Barn where soft candle light created a special atmosphere. Nearly a hundred members and guests sat down at individual tables, and the dinner of smoked trout and succulent duckling provided the right prelude to gay and happy dancing until one o'clock in the morning. It was a joyful, carefree evening, informal and with a delicate flavour of "Midsummer Night's Dream" about it. *Mariann.*

THE 16th LANDSGEMEINDE OF THE SWISS IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND

On Sunday, 21st June, more than a hundred Swiss and their friends gathered at the Memorial Gardens, Hebden Bridge, in Yorkshire, for the occasion of the 16th Lands-gemeinde which has now become a traditional function in our social calendar.

Disappointedly our Ambassador in London could not be with us owing to the demands on his time. He was represented by Monsieur Roch from the Embassy, who is no stranger to this event. Our Consul in Manchester, Monsieur G. Brunner, accompanied by his charming wife and daughter, and Monsieur Roch were received by Councillor H. H. Crabtree, who invited us to take coffee in the Civic Hall. This was most welcome in view of the quite chilly weather.

Feeling strengthened and warmed, our younger compatriots set off afoot for a one-hour's walk to Hardcastle Crag, while those less energetic left in cars for the car park, thus leaving themselves only a half-hour's ramble. There are two ways to the top of these delightful Crag, one follows the course of a running stream crossed higher up by stepping-stones to reach the height, the other a mountain path at a higher level offered attractive scenery and, through the trees, a lovely view of the stream in the valley below. There was an abundance of "Blaubeeren" growing on the hillsides and in the wild grandeur it was not difficult to imagine oneself in our beloved homeland. Reaching the Crag we spread ourselves comfortably on the hillocks to enjoy our picnic lunch.

Now came the time for the highlight of our day's enjoyment together, which we owe to our late beloved member Henri Monney now no longer with us, who initiated this yearly event. Professor P. Inebnit of Leeds University, in good voice, gave us a condensed history of Switzerland dating the entry of each Canton into the Confederation. The citizens of each Canton were called to the centre of the "Ring" and many took the opportunity to sing the appropriate song in which we all joined. Madame Obrist added colour by the splendid costume of Berne which she wore. When Glarus was called an especially loud welcome was given to Monsieur J. Jenny, who at 87 years of age was our oldest member present, and as Professor Inebnit pointed out to us, he came to Manchester 63 years ago and found the Spiritual climate favourable! — Thus confounding the critics! He went on to speak of the goodwill existing between the Swiss Colony and their host country and then invited the English friends present to join the centre Ring where all joined in singing "Trittst im Morgenrot Daher".

The end of the afternoon brought us back to the Civic Hall to a satisfying high tea including the delicious *pâtisserie* of the Swiss *confiseur* J. Sohm of Oldham. Our Chairman Dr. A. V. Obrist welcomed our new Consul Monsieur G. Brunner and his wife, Monsieur Roch, Councillor Mrs. V. E. Hickson, Chairman of the Rural District of Hepton, Councillor H. H. Crabtree, Chairman of the Hebden Royal Urban District Council, and everyone present. Monsieur Brunner replied with an excellent speech in which he said he would be ready at all times in every way to help each and every one of us. Monsieur Roch brought us greetings from the Ambassador, and expressed his own pleasure at being with us again. Councillor H. Crabtree replied with a hearty speech of welcome and was especially pleased to hear the proceedings spoken in English, he remarked on the children who were delightful and had spent the day without a tear. Councillor Mrs. V. Hickson ended with a pretty speech.

After this we sang a few songs which made us nostalgic, and so, with farewells to our friends old and new, we made our way home really happy, having participated in a successful *Landsgemeinde*. S.T.

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The "Guardian" had an article on the "Landsgemeinde" on 22nd July. The following are reprints from Arthur Hopcraft's "Swiss Role Call".

"The bosky gradients of Hardcastle Crag, a generalised misnomer for some acres of National Trust woodland just over the hill from Hebden Bridge, could manage no more than a dulled gleam, like evening ivy, to welcome the Swiss exiles of the North of England for their annual "Little Landsgemeinde" yesterday. "This

beautiful and friendly landscape", Professor J. P. Inebnit called it, but he has seen it in sunnier moods during the last 16 years.

"The Swiss, mainly from the West Riding and Manchester, have gathered there every third Sunday in June since 1948 to evoke a few echoes of their home country, to talk Swiss German, Swiss French, and Swiss Italian to each other over cups of orange juice, and sing a patriotic song or two in that tuneful and discretely jolly Swiss way.

"They chose Hardcastle Crag in the first place because, Professor Inebnit said, it was nicely placed between Leeds and Manchester and looked "a little bit like Switzerland".

"Professor Inebnit, who lectured in French history at Leeds University for 43 years, conducted it with a statesman's dignity and in an Englishman's English. He led an opening chorus of "Là-haut sur la montagne", and then took the group through a potted history of the Swiss Confederacy, calling to him as he listed the cantons the families who came from each. Except for the doctor's wife in Bernese national dress, the gathering had a distinctly English look while it was merely a picnic party. Once the singing started the tweed jockets, grey flannels and flat caps were seen to be filled with an unmistakeable Swiss neatness and mountain valley bonniness."

PERSONAL

We wish to congratulate Captain and Mrs. Paul Bleiker of 20, Birch Grove, Hempstead near Gillingham, on the birth of a son, their fourth child. Our congratulations also go to the proud grandparents Mr. and Mrs. A. Bleiker of 6 Hanworth Road, Feltham Middlesex.

Swiss National Day Celebration and Gala Dance

SATURDAY, 1st AUGUST 1964, at 6.30 p.m.

(Doors open at 5.45 p.m.)

at

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