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“LANDSGEMEINDE” 1967

The Swiss of the North meet at Hardcastle-Crags.

On Sunday, 18th June, members of the Yorkshire and Manchester Swiss Clubs and their friends met again at Hebden Bridge for the nineteenth “Landsgemeinde” of the Swiss living in the North of England, and it speaks well for the increasing popularity of this yearly event when we consider the very encouraging number of people taking part in it. We counted well over 130 in the ring and over 100 at the later proceedings at Hebden Bridge itself.

As for many years previously, the weather was very kind to us as we set out by car and on foot through the lovely and picturesque wooded valley to our first meeting place well up Hardcastle-Crags, which is now the property of the Halifax and District Boy-Scouts Association. Huge Swiss flags and other decorations gave this place that little home-touch we so much like. After having greeted each other and made perhaps some new acquaintances, everybody sat down to a very hearty and restoring picnic-lunch. Specially pleasing was the sight of such a happy array of young people, even children, which augures well for our future.

Professor Jean Inebnit, President of the Yorkshire Swiss Club, this year's hostess club, took charge of the “Landsgemeinde” proper, and soon the traditional ring was formed around him. He started with the roll-call of the various Cantons, and in doing so interlaced it with comments on the historical growth of our Country, giving us clear and vivid glimpses into the more important happenings covering a period of many hundreds of years, resulting eventually in the creation of Switzerland as we know it today. For us Swiss abroad, this development culminated in the forming of the “Fifth” Switzerland, now solidly anchored in a new article of the Federal Constitution.

Calling on the Canton of Vaud, it was specially pleasing to us to applaud the welcome presence of Monsieur Alexandre Nicod, the French-speaking Swiss pastor from London who took advantage of the occasion to address us on the theme taken from Zaccaria 8/16: “. . . A vous les fortes, rendez une justice qui engendre la paix . . .”, and we are just wondering how many times in our lives and on how many occasions and places such wise and true words could have been put to practical use.

We were also honoured by the attendance of Monsieur J. R. Gaechter, Secretary of the Swiss Embassy in London, especially present to convey to us the greetings and good wishes of our Ambassador Monsieur Long, and to be able to do so he chose Hebden Bridge as night-quarters, perhaps the first time for a guest attending our “Landsgemeinde” to do so. Much appreciated was also the presence of our Consul of Manchester and Madame Brunner, and also our new Vice-Consul Mr. Zellweger. In the unavoidable absence of their husbands, we were happy to see amongst us Mrs. Jaggi and Mrs. Bolliger, the wives of the President and Vice-President of the Manchester Swiss Club, and we do sincerely hope that they enjoyed this unique gathering and the very friendly atmosphere prevailing.

Professor Inebnit had some kind and sincere words for our English friends and participants from other Nations, and we felt that many must have shared our feelings of friendship which certainly will endure the test of time.

Later in the afternoon, we met for high-tea at the Civic Hall at Hebden Bridge where we were joined by the Chairman of Hebden Rural District, Mr. Armstrong

and his Lady and by the Chairman of Hebden Royd Council, Mr. Knowles and his Lady, who again expressed their great pleasure and satisfaction to be amongst us, and their kind and witty words left us in no doubt that they wished, through us, to know more about Switzerland and its people.

Our new Vice-Consul, Mr. Zellweger, could also spare a few minutes and as was mentioned already before, we wished him a very interesting, happy and possibly long stay in England.

Personal guests of our President were the Chairman of Calder High School, Mr. S. Muschamp and his Lady, who in a short but well received address directed our eyes and thoughts towards the various and very important aspects of youth; even on occasions like this, all possible help and encouragement should be given to our younger generation in whose hands, after all, lies our future. Our committees and action-groups should give this matter further thought whenever deciding on future activities.

To all these fine words, Professor Inebnit replied appropriately, thanking club committees, secretaries and other helpers for the hard work put into the organisation and successful execution of this function. Thanks were also expressed to Mr. Lanfranchi for his excellent confectionery and to the caterers for having looked after us so well.

It was well brought home to all of us that this initially eminently Swiss function has gradually developed into an almost British-Swiss get-together, specially during the second part of the day at the Civic Hall, friendship, understanding and solidarity being at the base of it. All who were present most fervently hope that also in the future we may fully maintain such a high standard of public and international relationship and we felt that this is in the spirit and the minds of our people at home, who expect from us *Auslandschweizer* an ever closer and active collaboration with the various hostess countries and their peoples.

At the very end of this lovely afternoon, Mr. Lerch, the husband of Yorkshire Swiss Club's indefatigable Secretary, made us join in the well-known *Heimat-Lied*: “. . . Luegit vo Baerge ond Thal . . .”. These warm and melodious tunes filled many of us with a nostalgia for Home and gave a truly human note to the final moments of this happy and memorable day. Finally everybody left with a hearty farewell and an *au revoir* for next year.

Ermanno Berner.

PERSONAL

We wish to congratulate Dr. E. M. Bircher of 58 Stourcliffe Close, Stourcliffe Street, W.I., on his marriage to Mrs. Eve Caldecott, on 16th June.

* * *

We send best wishes to Mr. and Mrs. F. Vollmar on the birth of a son Alain Patrick Olivier. The baby is the second grandchild of one of our subscribers, Brigadier J. C. Millioud of Morges.

BIRTHDAYS

We send our best wishes to the following readers who will be celebrating their birthdays: Mr. J. Zimmermann (77) on 21st and Monsieur B. de Fischer, Berne, (66) on 22nd July. Mr. and Mrs. F. Delaloye have their 54th wedding anniversary on 27th of July.

Many happy returns of the day to them as well as to any other readers whose birthdays fall within the next two weeks.