

The Yorkshire Landsgemeinde

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China. Mr. Bosshardt fell ill and was allowed to ride on horse-back. On many occasions he was told that he was going to be set free, but it never happened. At last the conditions of his release were read to him. He was neither allowed to accept or reject them. He was put in an unguarded house and obliged upon his honour not to leave it before sunrise the next day. This was the first time in 18 months he had been left without a guard. It was Easter Day when he was released. A young Christian boy helped him get away to Kumming. The authorities there denounced him as a Russian spy, but fortunately the General had heard of Mr. Bosshardt and released him. He was very ill with beriberi and not fit to travel but his wife managed to get a seat on an aeroplane and she flew to Kumming. One can imagine their joy at seeing each other again.

It is indeed a remarkable story, a deep human experience, and we were most grateful to Mr. Bosshardt for having given us this inside view of such a frightful adventure. After so many years, we felt relieved that he, his wife and his unfortunate friends were able to reach a safe port. Our applause was sincere and we hope that we shall see him again at some future occasion.

(E. Berner)

(Mr. Bosshardt has consigned his amazing adventures in a book called, if my memory is correct, "Missionary in China", which had a great success in the late 1930's. It is currently being re-edited. Ed.).

THE YORKSHIRE LANDSGEMEINDE

On June 22nd the Swiss of Yorkshire took part in their 22nd Lands-gemeinde. The Swiss of Manchester and Liverpool usually turn up in force at the event, but, apparently as a result of faulty communications, very few of them made the journey to Hebden Bridge, a sedate town wedged in a deep valley on the road from Manchester to Bradford and surrounded by the lofty hills of the Yorkshire moors, offering the most beautiful sceneries and open spaces of the North.

The 22nd Landsgemeinde can really be considered as a highlight in the history of Anglo-Swiss relations. Every year for the past 21 years, on a Sunday that almost invariably turned out to be sunny, the inhabitants of Hebden Bridge had seen the Swiss burghers of the North gather for their traditional hike up Castle Craggs and their Lands-gemeinde at Hebden Hay. This regularity and fidelity towards their town touched the indwellers of the town who decided last year to form a Hebden Bridge Swiss Society as a kind of gesture of reciprocity. The regular visits to Hebden Bridge by the Swiss of the North had awakened an interest and likening for Switzerland and this out-of-the-way part of England and thus it came about that, for the first time, a "Swiss Week" was organised in Heb-

den Bridge under the auspices of the Hebden Swiss Society.

The instigator of the movement was Mr. David Fletcher, a young biology teacher, who had lived all his life in Hebden Bridge and had not otherwise been connected with Switzerland. He has since become a firm Swissophile as "the good grain had been sown". His two young daughters are called Trudi and Heidi and his wife, who has recently opened a fashion shop, plans to sell Swiss articles. I must mention David Fletcher for his hospitality and the exciting ride he gave me across the moors, and in relation to his deep involvement with the development of his town and of his valley. This area of Yorkshire, traditionally a textile region, has been hard struck by the recess of the industry. The Calder Valley is strewn with relics of a declining textile industry—bleak and sooty abandoned mills which in bygone days gave full employment to the area. Now that the volume of the industry has dwindled and that the narrowness of the valley prevents new factories from being built in the area, many of the people of Hebden Bridge have had to move to other parts of the country in search of employment. Hebden Bridge thus threatened to become a moribund town. This, at least, was a feeling shared by

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many of its elderly inhabitants, moaning at its apparently dark future. Mr. Fletcher and a group of young comrades, who loved the town and its surroundings, determined to stand up against this despondency and created a Civic Trust Association with the aim of making Hebden Bridge as inhabitable as possible. One of their first actions was to give Hebden Bridge a face-lift and to encourage the townfolk not to let their houses be run down. The campaign's slogan was "keep Hebden Bridge clean" and as a splendid living example, they devoted their Sunday mornings to cleaning up and restoring the derelict but recoverable buildings of the surroundings. At present, the small band of young renovators are busy restoring the remaining aisle of a 16th century mansion up in the charming Old Town and plan to convert it into a local museum. The occurrence of a Swiss Week doubtless fitted with the aim of quickening the town's blood circulation and for a week the old and young in Hebden Bridge took part in a series of events placed under the White Cross of Helvetia. The members of the Civic Trust also had the kindness of joining us Swiss for our walk up Castle Cragg and for the tea which we enjoyed with the dignitaries of Hebden Bridge.

This "Swiss Week" was not a commercial stunt like other national weeks staged in large cities. It was not launched as sponsored by the Consulate and could really be considered as a popular, spontaneous and grass roots event. The streets of the town were festooned with strings of bright flags. A wide streamer stretched across the main street announced Swiss Week to the world and posters were singing the beauties of Switzerland on every shop window.

The week began on Monday, 15th June with an art competition for school-children in the Civic Hall. Mr. Rolf Born, our Consul in Manchester, was present at this opening event.

He presented the organisers of Swiss Week with (I believe) the lavishly illustrated adventures of Heidi and distributed official and edifying booklets on Switzerland to the children.

Six days later, we were ourselves to admire the pictures, all of which had Switzerland as their theme and were painted by very young school-children. The children's fantasy did not merely portray customary peaks and mountains, but lakes, skiers, Swiss peasants, forests and cable railways as well. They had been well versed in Swiss studies and were ready to perpetuate the image of Switzerland abroad. Next to each individual picture were billed the individual essays on Switzerland composed by the artist. Many were very entertaining. One essay, written by a seven-year-old, contained details on the Swiss rolling stock industry which were unknown to me!

The following days at Hebden Bridge saw a musical evening, with Swiss songs, Swiss wine and cheese; then a Swiss gastronomic evening with a cookery demonstration with Swiss dishes (I wonder which dishes?) and on Thursday the youth of Hebden Bridge organised a hike through Hardcastle Craggs. On Friday they danced at an evening which included a dinner and was entitled "Rock and Swiss Roll". I was told that the many partakers had a frustrating try at Swiss dances. The last event was held on Saturday evening in the town's midget theatre. I was then already at Hebden Bridge and saw there various Swiss tourist films with about two hundred Yorkshiremen and

women. The films were the usual alpine fare, with the exception of a 1964 Expo film showing the industrial side of Switzerland.

Next Sunday morning, the Hebden Bridge Brass Band was performing on the neat, small local park adjoining the main Manchester to Bradford road long before the first Swiss families flocked in for the Landsgemeinde. The Hebden Bridge park was the designated meeting place of the Swiss of the North on that shimmering and limpid Sunday morning.

A lonely policeman was standing in front of the park gate and Sunday strollers were listening to the tunes blown by the brass band, wondering where they came from. No wonder: they were Swiss. Eventually the first participators to the Landsgemeinde arrived in their cars, and one of the first to arrive was Mr. Amman, the founder of the Landsgemeinde at Hebden Bridge and who at 84 is one of the oldest Swiss between Manchester and Dunfermline.

The little group quickly grew. Professor Inebnit arrived with Mrs. Inebnit and their daughter. Consul Born arrived with Mrs. Born and the Vice-Consul, Mr. Zellweger. Pastor Nicod turned up, having been invited from London by the Yorkshire Swiss Club to minister at the Landsgemeinde. The dignitaries of Hebden Bridge were there too and the chairmen of the Hebden Bridge Rural and Urban Councils greeted us with their brassy chains proudly hanging on their chests.

At half past ten the assembly was complete and we walked to the Civic Hall, a stone's throw away, and began our day together with a cup of coffee. Having admired the artistic achieve-



A family reunion of Yorkshire Swiss and Hebden Bridge dignitaries (picture received by courtesy of the Halifax Courier)

ments of the children of Hebden Bridge we took our seats at the ready-laid tables and Prof. Inebnit, President of the Yorkshire Swiss Club, stood up to open this 22nd Landsgemeinde, welcoming us and thanking the people of Hebden Bridge for their hospitality. The Chairman of the Urban Council, Mr. Fred Barker, welcomed us all cheerily with northern accent and invited us all to a good time. Mr. Inebnit then recalled how Switzerland was founded, and the Pact on the Grütli concluded, "in the name of God". This brought Pastor Nicod, who conducted a short service, to centre his message on the presence of God at the foundation of the motherland. His presence, if only it were received, was there to continue to guide her destiny.

We next set out in our cars for the short journey to the parking place some two miles out of town at the start of the walk to Castle Craggs. Castle Craggs is a delightful and lush valley which has made the headlines at the end of last year when the people of the region and their MP, Douglas Houghton (also president of the Parliamentary Labour Party) fought a stiff battle to prevent a reservoir from being sited there as had been planned.

Half an hour of leisurely walk brought us to Hebden Hay, a green glade on which we were to spend the best part of the afternoon together. Every family settled down for the picnic, some retired into the shade of the woods, some preferred to roast in the sun.

There had been ample time for everybody to talk to every friend present, to digest and to have a siesta by the time Prof. Inebnit asked us to gather nearer to the lawn so that we could all take part in the symbolic and traditional rebuilding of Switzerland that he was now to conduct.

He embarked upon the 679 years of glorious history which separate us from the Federal Pact of 1291. It was a long yarn, but Professor Inebnit, standing under the blazing sun and speaking loudly for all to hear, spun it in its whole length, for all his 80 years of age. As he ticked off each canton in their order of entry into the Confederation, the representatives among us from each of these cantons gathered on the lawn until a fair-sized crowd had gathered around Prof. Inebnit. I believe that every canton had a deputy on Hebden Way except Fribourg, but I may have been inattentive!

When this traditional presentation was over, the time had come for us to return to Hebden Bridge for tea. A relaxed walk down valley and we were all at the car park and minutes away from a copious tea in which the Civic Trust youth and the dignitaries of the Calder Valley were to honour us with their presence.

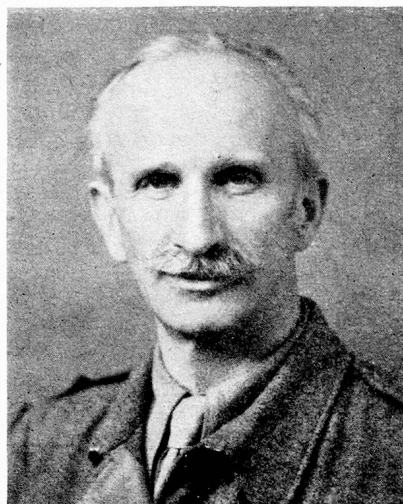
There were just one or two cakes left on the trays when Prof. Inebnit rose to communicate the regrets of those who had not been able to join us

at this 22nd Landsgemeinde. The Embassy in London, Mr. Otto Hartmann from Edinburgh, Dr. Bolliger and Mr. E. Berner, the last two on holidays with their families, counted among the most noticed absentees.

Prof. Inebnit made no mention of the Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad but when he later returned to his home in Leeds, he found a telegram waiting for him from Mr. Toni Rihs, head of the Youth Department at the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad, in which he expressed his regrets at not being able to attend the Landsgemeinde. (Professor Inebnit has asked me to acknowledge this telegram in the present report). Then Mr. B. Simon, President of the Manchester Swiss Club, who had managed to join us for tea, thanked the organisers of the Landsgemeinde and the Swiss Week for all they had done, and thanked the Chairmen of the Hebden Bridge Rural and Urban Councils and their ladies, the other members of these Councils, the presidents, chairmen or commissioners from the Rotary Club of Hebden Bridge, the Ladies Circle, the Round Table, the Inner

Wheel, the Halifax District Scout Council and the Business and Professional Calder Valley Club for their presence. This array not only showed courteous intention of honouring us Swiss, but also proved that the Calder Valley Community is well organised. Mr. Waring, speaking on behalf of the Halifax District Scout Council, expressed his satisfaction at our regular use of Hebden Hay, which is a Scout property and looked forward to seeing us again. Then Mr. David Fletcher said a few words on the history of the Hebden Bridge Swiss Society and its aims. His was the last address. Mr. B. Simon reminded us that the traditional Landsgemeinde of the Swiss of the North would again be taking place next year again on the third Sunday of the month of June. He closed the meeting officially. The handshaking and the adieux lasted out a long time after the gathering had been ended. The meeting slowly disbanded and the Landsleute said au revoir to Hebden Bridge until the Summer of another year.

(PMB)



PROFESSOR JEAN PHILIPPE INEBNIT—80

We have the greatest pleasure in congratulating Professor Inebnit for his 80th birthday, which fell on July 5th. We can also say that this celebration came on a fitting date, since it dovetailed nicely with the Yorkshire Landsgemeinde. It is then most convenient to talk about the man, having just reported on the day which he contributed so much to make a success.

I met Prof. Inebnit for the first time on that same week-end. He had made the very kind suggestion of boarding my train at Leeds and making the journey to Bradford with me so as to exchange ideas and get to know each

other. The many social activities of the morrow, he feared, would not give us a chance to do that.

So it happened that in the course of our conversation on the train to Bradford and in the buffet at Bradford station, we talked of world affairs and I got to learn more in detail of Prof. Inebnit's ideas on the destiny of our country and world peace, ideas which he had often expressed in Swiss gatherings in Great Britain and for which his reputation had reached down to the London Colony a long time ago.

Prof. Inebnit, the only Swiss resident with such an academic title, is a pacifist and renowned as such among Swiss Circles. He may indeed have been the first Swiss officer ever to have been thrown in jail as a conscientious objector! It was some time after having served this term of imprisonment that he left for Leeds, where he became a professor of French History, and where he has lived for 50 years.

The "pacifist" label naturally requires some further qualification. Prof. Inebnit is basically opposed to the concept of wars as *necessary* and *accepted* means of settling differences between nations, even though they are usually adopted as a last resort. Nations will continue to be torn by wars as long as this irresponsible and complacent tolerance is adopted by the powerful of the world. As wars are still accepted as a "normal" (one could almost say "legal" possibility) every country finds it equally "normal" to spend vast sums of sterile money in creating instruments of destruction and in squandering billions of man-hours by making their national servicemen practice for a war which, if it came, would destroy the