

Swiss rally at Whipsnade

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SWISS RALLY AT WHIPSNADE

When I visited my Birmingham friends some three months ago, I was acquainted with their plans to arrange a "Swiss Rally" at Whipsnade during the summer. I thought then that the idea was a splendid one, although I rather felt dubious about the support the London Colony would give to such an undertaking; which, as far as I am aware, was quite an innovation.

As a matter of fact I received quite a rude shock, when on acquainting an elderly Swiss Lady with the fact of a Meeting at Whipsnade, — she indignantly said: "the idea, fancy meeting at a Zoo," — guessing her objections to the environment I politely pointed out to her, that there were no monkeys at this very place, and that she would be undoubtedly the only one — who would object, — the result of my well meant explanation was, that I was told that I am not at all nice to know, rude and badly brought up, and the subscription to the S.O. was cancelled forthwith, for which I tender my humble apology to the Publisher of this famous paper.

I am more than happy to acquaint my readers with the fact that the "Swiss Rally" to Whipsnade was an undisputed success, and I hasten to congratulate the Swiss Club Birmingham on this venture. The weather, too, kept fine, a great factor in an outing of this kind; but then the jovial President of the Birmingham Club assured me weeks and weeks ago, that the weather would not let him down, and that whenever he arranges an outing the sun proves to be a faithful ally. I would make here a suggestion to the Swiss Sports Committee, that every effort should be made, to secure the presence of M. Brun on the future meetings at Herne Hill, and if they will confine this task to me, I shall be delighted to be responsible for his attendance, even if I have to bring him there "Bound and gagged."

The Birmingham Contingent which was swelled by some of our compatriots from Leicester and Manchester, arrived by char-a-banc and private cars about 150 strong. I understand that they had quite an enjoyable trip and judging from their happy faces, they were none the worse for their lengthy journey. My fears, that the London Societies would not come up to the scratch were soon dispersed, char-a-banc after char-a-banc arrived, cars speeded towards Whipsnade, buses from Luton brought many of our countrymen, and I am officially informed that from 450-480 tickets were actually sold, which is a splendid achievement and no doubt exceeded all the expectations of the most optimistic forecasts.

Unfortunately I was unable to accept the cordial invitation of the Swiss Club Birmingham to be their guest at the Luncheon which was held at the Pavilion, owing to previous arrangements made, but I am told that our compatriot, M. Schorno, who is in charge of the catering at Whipsnade, served them a delicious luncheon, to which over 200 participants sat down. The majority of the London excursionists took the opportunity of dining *à fresco* in or around Whipsnade.

The first meeting was arranged for 1.30 p.m. at the Onseley Kiosk, and here again I must confess that I was too late, there were several reasons for it, one being that, trying to be in good time, I hurried through my dinner at such a speed, that a chicken bone lodged itself in my throat, and it took the Secretary of the City Swiss Club, as well as an ex-President of this illustrious Society some time to deliver me from this unwelcome intruder, after my restoration, which was precipitated by a sip out of a little flask, we speeded through the lovely lanes of beautiful Hertfordshire to our meeting place.

It was a very fine idea to make all participants wear the 1st of August badge, firstly by doing so, everybody helped to further a good cause, and secondly, it gave one an opportunity to address the wearer of same, without any formal introduction, yet I must confess, that when addressing some of the charming lady wearers in "Schwyzerdütsch" I met with dire disappointment; the majority of them politely told me, that they had not the faintest idea what I was talking about, and that perhaps the heat did not agree with me; and that they were born either at or around Birmingham, and that they could not even "yodde" I apologized, and on timidly accosting another sweet bearer of this famous emblem, this time in English, she told me with a saucy little wink, that I need not try to show off, that she knew "Schwyzerdütsch" as well as I do, or even better. Embarrassed, I rushed away nearly colliding with a Kangaroo; I almost decided to throw myself under the feet of an elephant nearby, but when my good lady informed me that this would make a fearful mess, I decided to postpone my suicidal intentions to a more opportune moment. In jolly company we visited in turn the lions, tigers and polar bears. All this time I felt as if some terrible tragedy was impending, the nearer we came to the lions' dwelling place, the more agitated I became, and casting a look behind me, I saw two eyes sternly fixed on me, and these eyes belonged to one of my countrymen,

whose performance at a recent Swiss concert I dared to criticize; now I understand why I had an uneasy conscience.

Was he, I turned over in my mind, going to throw me, as an easy prey, to those ferocious animals. But my fears were happily soon dispersed, when on shaking hands, he assured me, that my criticism was not only justified, but most helpful.

Shortly before 4 o'clock the members of the Rally met at the Pavilion to have tea together for which the greater part of the building was reserved. On casting a look round, I perceived the Swiss Minister, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, accompanied by his daughter, Mlle. Livia Paravicini, and the Presidents of the Swiss Mercantile Society Ltd, Swiss Rifle Association, Union Helvetia, Swiss Club (Schweizerbund), Swiss Culinary Society. The City Swiss Club was represented by the Hon. Secretary and an ex-President, and the Swiss Choral Society by its Vice-President, altogether a very distinguished representative body of the various institutions of London Societies.

Now I have to apologize to my readers for having announced in a previous article, that no speeches would be held, I made this statement after having been informed by some higher authority that speech making would be barred, but considering that the three speeches delivered took exactly five minutes, I feel sure that none of those present went away with a grudge. M. Brun, President of the Swiss Club Birmingham, in a few words expressed his thanks to the Minister for having honoured this Rally with his presence, and also voiced his admiration to the members of the London Colony for their ready response to the appeal made by his Society.

Monsieur Paravicini replied to his address by saying that it has given him and his daughter a special pleasure to attend this gathering, and that he hoped that it would not be the last time that our countrymen in the provinces would take the initiative to meet their compatriots. M. Lehmann, President of the S. M. S. Ltd., then thanked the Swiss Club Birmingham for the happy thought in arranging this most successful meeting. — I was particularly delighted to meet my Birmingham friends again, who, on the occasion of the last Rally in their town, entertained me so royally; I never mentioned to my wife yet, what compliments were paid to me, by some of the charming Birmingham ladies, as I was frightened that my outings might suffer a certain curtailment, but I have certainly appreciated their kindness and I am looking forward to my next trip, in order to re-new and fortify the many acquaintances I have made there.

After having given the Minister a rousing farewell on his parting, the company again dispersed, giving the many inmates of the Zoo another opportunity to have a good look at some of the specimens hailing from our country. The Swiss are really a good-hearted community, judging from the way in which they regaled lions, tigers and other wild beasts with ice cream blocks and monkey nuts, but why oh why? have they not been told at school that these animals are not vegetarians, and yet we pride ourselves that we are one of the leading nations as far as education is concerned. Some of the wolves f.i., simply sneered at biscuit wafers, and I do not blame them, we ought to know better.

The final Meeting, just before breaking up, was again held at the Onseley Kiosk, and the "loving cup" was passed round very freely.

Everybody was anxious to congratulate M. Brun on this most successful outing, and in my enthusiasm, I got in a fearful mix-up, as one charming lady was taken to be my wife, although she never had any aspirations to assume this post, and was consequently introduced in that capacity, and I am anticipating some awkward moments, and whatever trouble will arise in the future I

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sincerely hope that my Birmingham friends will help me out.

Before finishing my narrative it might interest my readers to know that our old friend and well-known Pastry Cook, Mr. F. H. Rohr, who was present, was lucky enough to secure a big contract, he has been asked by the authorities to supply the Elephants with *Petits fours* for the next twelve months, and I understand that he has made arrangements with the Armstrong-Saurer Company to have the goods delivered by their famous lorries, we hope to publish a photograph in one of our next numbers about the first convoy, which I understand will amount to several tons.

I understand that it is the intention to hold a Rally like the Whipsnade one, every year, which is certainly a capital idea; but somehow I should suggest a meeting place of less magnitude, so that the whole gathering would be a more compact one. I was told by various participants that they did not even see our Birmingham friends, I however informed them that they look very much the same as the London Swiss, or perhaps even a little more handsome.

I feel sure that all those who have attended this Rally, have enjoyed the few hours amongst their compatriots and our gratitude must go out to the organisers of the Birmingham Swiss Club, and especially to its President, M. P. Brun.

Well done Birmingham!

ST.

FOREIGN FIRMS AND FACTORIES.

The official statements of the number of foreign firms which have begun production in this country since the latter end of last year become steadily more impressive. Intimations have been made in *The Financial Times* as occasion required of the detail of the movement. It is more than passing interest. Three causes account for it, as the accumulation of evidence over a period of months shows. The suspension of gold payments and the depreciation of sterling started the movement. Confidence in settled conditions inspired by the setting up of the National Government helped to decide more than one foreign manufacturer who previously had feared that industrially Great Britain was going into eclipse. The introduction of the tariff brought into play the factor of self-preservation, and that speeded up the process. This is apparent from the fact that the number of foreign firms newly established in England was 57 early in May, whereas more recently it was known to be over 20 higher. In all, according to the latest return, 123 new factories were set working between last November and the first week of May. Some have been opened by British firms in order to manufacture goods formerly imported, and others by foreign firms to get behind the tariff.

All these businesses are actually in production. That more will follow is suggested strongly by the vast excess of the number of inquiries for factory sites over that of completed negotiations. It is of favourable significance that of recent months not only the foreign manufacturer has displayed initiative. The British manufacturer has responded to his new-found opportunities in two ways. He has either enlarged his own plant, where his products can compete, or he has acquired the English manufacturing rights of the foreign article. No exact comparison is available, and it would seem that the foreign element has been the more active; but the home manufacturer has not stood still. The foreigner has not been prevented by exchange restrictions from making his new arrangements. One of the leading estate agencies was able to report early this year that it had succeeded in making necessary financial plans in this country. Thus new avenues for capital investment have been opened up or old ones en-