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LEARNING TO SKI IN ENGLAND.

An informal Press gathering was held on Wednesday last at the British Industries House Club, W.1, to introduce the ski classes which are organised by the National Council of Swiss Ski Schools.

Courses in London will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays (6 p.m. to 7 p.m.) from November 4th to November 30th.

Fees for full course of eight lessons are 10/-, for single lesson 2/-.

Skis can be hired at the School at a charge of 2/- for the whole course, or 4d. per lesson. Bookings can be made at Thos. Cook and Son, Ltd., office, Berkeley Street, W.1, or at the Swiss Federal Railway office, 11b, Regent Street, London, W.1.

Skiing battles of the Alps are thus being won on the slopes of London and Manchester.

It is estimated that in the forthcoming winter sports season nearly 250,000 Britons will visit the famous European snow centres. Many will have their training in England's "winter sports camps," where tyros become near-experts before ever they cross the Channel.

On slopes in London and Manchester they are being coached now for their Christmas and New Year holidays in Switzerland.

Not only are thousands being tried out for their first venture on snow and ice, but many unknown Alpine villages are being tried out for the first time this season as fully-fledged winter sports resorts. Some of the names on the travel agencies' lists have never been heard of before by skiing enthusiasts.

A travel expert said that the greatest winter sports season ever experienced was expected. The reasons, he said, were:

Popularisation of ice sports through ice hockey and indoor skating.

Presentation of ice spectacles on stage and screen.

Facilities for learning winter sports at home.

Many excursions have been arranged by the travel agencies. They will begin on Dec. 1st and end in May. The season will reach its peak at Christmas and New Year.

WHY SKI GYMNASTICS?

By CHARLIE SCHAER.

Swiss Ski-Instructor.

Ski Gymnastic Exercises aim at giving preparatory instruction in all degrees of ski-ing proficiency. They are thus intended both for the absolute beginner as well as for the expert. In ski-ing, as indeed in every department of present-day life, it is obvious that a higher standard of efficiency is attained through organised work and proper instruction than can ever be achieved by the long and laborious efforts of the self-taught.

There are two ways of learning to ski — the right way and the wrong way, and there is only one right way for every position of the body, since each movement made in ski-ing is governed by natural laws. The Swiss standard technique is based on this fundamental fact. There is and can be no better technique; for it embraces in the simplest form every movement that the ski-er is called upon to master.

Besides going through a course of general physical training, the pupils are simultaneously introduced to the Swiss standard ski-ing technique. This is a welcome opportunity of learning to "feel at home" on your skis again, and of developing your sense of balance. Afterwards, physically and mentally ready for action, you will find the first ski-ing lesson or tour much easier, as well as more beneficial and enjoyable.

It is obvious that it is bound to make a difference whether one undergoes a course of ordinary physical jerks as a form of general training, or whether one is put through a specialised course of *Ski Gymnastics* incorporating the movements peculiar to ski-ing. Systematic specialisation initiates the beginner into the first secrets of ski-ing technique and offers the medium or proficient ski-er a welcome opportunity of getting fighting fit for the coming winter season.

Ski-ers may be classified into those who can and those who can't. The former may again be subdivided into good, bad and indifferent ski-ers. But every would-be ski-ing ace, whether he be an absolute beginner or already blooded, should attend a "dry" course of ski-ing if he possibly can.

If the human body is *supple and elastic*, it needs far less physical strength to maintain its balance than does a *stiff, unyielding* body. The former absorbs shocks and strains, counteracting their effect by elastic yield, whereas the latter stand up to them rigidly, thereby receiving their full force suddenly and abruptly. It is thus apparent that elasticity produces greater ability to react — and to react instantaneously — to the sudden demands made upon it by uneven ground.

One of the most frequent failings to which ski-ers are liable is the inability to assume a *correct bent knee position*: the fair sex, above all, is at a disadvantage here, for high heels stiffen the ankles.

The angle of the knees in the bent knee position, e.g., between the foot and the rear line of the thigh, should normally be about 60 degrees; frequently, however, one finds people who cannot get farther than 85 degrees. Should such a ski-er try to get down into a deep crouch on the run his posterior will project too far aft, the demands made upon the muscles will be much higher, and his posture will be far too cramped to allow of the necessary *elasticity*. Arms and ski-sticks have then to be thrust forward to maintain balance. Energy and good will can more or less remedy this drawback, the elasticity of the limbs being increased by suitable exercises, and above all by such as tend to stretch the rear portions of the thighs.

A "dry" ski-ing course is always beneficial: it systematically relaxes and strengthens stiffened muscles, loosens up rusty joints. The whole body is toned up, the mind taught to react instantaneously and correctly. Neither mind nor body should be neglected by the ski-er in training, for the rhythm that permeates the real sportsman's body from head to foot originates subconsciously in his thoughts.

The clumsy, inexperienced ski-er can be recognised as soon as he begins to strap on his skis; his limbs ache and he is hardly able to keep his feet, let alone control them. But the learner who has taken a "dry" course is no longer a neophyte. Most people waste the first week of their winter sports holiday getting their bodies accustomed to the special demands made upon it by ski-ing. The main object of ski-gymnastics is to eliminate this "donkey work." A "dry" course enables you to go on to the snow-field already half trained, gives you a flying start and saves you useful time and temper. You will feel the benefit right away.

A cheerful and spontaneous spirit of sporting comradeship does much to enhance the success of these ski-ing courses, and makes learning a pleasure. The excellence of the Swiss ski-ing technique does the rest.

EXPOSITION NATIONALE SUISSE 1939 ZURICH.

Concours pour le texte d'une Cantate.

La Direction de l'Exposition Nationale Suisse organise en commun avec la Société des Ecrivains Suisses un concours pour la rédaction du texte d'une cantate. Cette cantate doit être l'expression artistique de l'esprit et de l'idéal du peuple suisse. Elle sera exécutée lors de l'inauguration de l'Exposition et à l'occasion de fêtes qui auront lieu au cours de cette manifestation.

Les moyens d'exécution de la cantate pourront être les suivants: 1 orchestre symphonique; 1 chœur mixte; 2-4 solistes; év. 1 chœur de garçons ou un chœur d'enfants.

Pour le moment, on demande un projet de texte provisoire. La musique sera l'œuvre d'un compositeur suisse. Seuls des Suisses pourront prendre part au concours.

Les projets doivent être envoyés jusqu'au 15 janvier au plus tard.

Le jury se compose de: MM. Armin Meili, Directeur de l'Exposition Nationale Suisse; Prof. Dr. Walter Muschg, Bâle; Dr. Willy Schuh, Zurich; Dr. Maria Waser, Zollikon; Prof. Henri de Ziegler, Genève.

Les conditions de participation au concours, ainsi que des directives générales établies par l'Association des Musiciens Suisses, sont transmises aux intéressés par la Direction de l'Exposition Nationale Suisse, Walcheturm, Zurich.

MISCELLANEOUS ADVERTISEMENTS

REQUIRED COOK GENERAL for family of two residing in London. Apply giving full records, references and wages required. Post Box No. 11, Swiss Observer, 23, Leonard Street, E.C.2.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Thursday, November 25th — from 8.30 p.m. to 2 a.m. — Unione Helvetia Club — The "Old Friends" Dinner — at 1, Gerrard Place, W.1.

Friday, November 26th — City Swiss Club — Annual Banquet and Ball — at the Grosvenor House, Park Lane, W.1.

Friday, November 26th — Swiss Accordion Club — Concert and Supper at the "Schweizerbund," 74, Charlotte Street, W.

Wednesday, December 1st — at 7.30 p.m. — Société de Secours Mutuels — Monthly Meeting, at 74, Charlotte Street, W.1.

Wednesday, December 8th — Swiss Mercantile Society — Monthly Meeting — followed by a Film "Wintersport in the Alps," at 34/35, Fitzroy Square, London, W.

Wednesday, December 15th — Unione Ticinese — Concert and Ball, in aid of the Fonds de Secours, at Pagani's Restaurant, Great Portland Street, W.1.

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Dimanche, 21 Novembre :

11h. — Prédication : M. le Pasteur Jean Lageard.

11h. — Ecole du Dimanche.

6h.30 — Prédication : Mr. Exbrayat, cand. théol.

Mariage : le 15 novembre : Mr. Wilhelm Schneider de Wittenbach (St. Gall) et Miss Mabel Loveitt de Birmingham.

Incinération : le 16 novembre : Mr. Heinz Mäder, âgé de 21 ans (de Berne.)

Le Pasteur Emery reçoit le Mercredi de 11 heures à midi 30, à l'église, 79, Endell Street, W.C.2. S'adresser à lui pour tous les actes pastoraux. (téléphone : Museum 3100, domicile : Foyer Suisse, 12, Upper Bedford Place, W.C.1.)

SCHWEIZERKIRCHE (Deutschsprachige Gemeinde).

St. Anne's Church, 9, Gresham Street, E.C.2.

(near General Post Office.)

Sonntag, den 21. November 1937.

11 Uhr morgens, Gottesdienst und Sonntagsschule.

7 Uhr abends, Gottesdienst.

8 Uhr, Chorpöbe.

Anfragen wegen Religions- bzw. Confirmandenstunden und Amtshandlungen sind erbeten an den Pfarrer der Gemeinde : C. Th. Hahn, 43, Priory Road, Bedford Park, W. 4 (Telephon : Chiswick 4156). Sprechstunden : Dienstag 12-2 Uhr in der Kirche.