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SWISS CLUB, MANCHESTER.

First of August Celebration.

The Committee of the Manchester Swiss Club must be heartily congratulated that — in keeping with the special significance of this year's National Day — they decided to organise a gathering which was a good deal more ambitious in character than usual. It took the form of a day trip to Southport on the Lancashire coast, August 1st happily falling on a Sunday; helped by good weather, it proved to be an outstanding success.

It was in a very happy mood that some fifty compatriots assembled at 10.00 a.m. in Piccadilly, Manchester, starting point of our excursion.

When all were suitably decorated with 1st of August emblems (our Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Monney, having announced that 1s. 3d. was the minimum for each, but that the sky was the limit!) we set off in two motor coaches across the seemingly endless built-up area of Manchester and its suburbs. To the accompaniment of the happy Swiss songs of the younger generation — for many of whom this was the first National Day spent abroad — the drive then took us along some of the pleasant undulating byeways of Cheshire. At Warrington we crossed the important Ship Canal which brings ocean-going ships of up to 15,000 tons to the busy inland port of industrial Manchester. A short halt at a local inn at Winnick gave time for an early refresher, whereupon we continued our journey through the fertile rural area of South-West Lancashire.

Mid-day saw us driving through the well-known Lord Street, the "Boulevard" of Southport, and on arrival at the terminus our party split into two groups after having been joined by a number of other compatriots who had reached Southport by train or private car.

Mr. Heinrich, our sporty Vice-President, was asked to chaperone the bathing enthusiasts to the open-air swimming pool on the sea-front. He was followed by an impressive number and the tale goes that he did not consider himself satisfied until everyone had followed him down the big water chute.

The others gathered at the Pavilion Hotel for lunch and subsequently, led by Mr. Monney, who seems to know the local beauty spots exceedingly well, went for a leisurely walk along the beautiful flower-carpeted banks of Rotten Row, where an infinite variety of

herbaceous border plants thrive and bloom in amazing profusion. The return walk took us along the sandy beach, the more energetic ones being invited to walk right out to the sea then at low tide and no less than two miles away.

Half past four saw us all gathered together in the ballroom of the Pavilion Hotel, where a large Swiss flag, sent along by our Consulate, provided a simple yet very effective background to the proceedings which were to follow.

After a generous high-tea in Lancashire fashion, our Vice-President addressed the gathering, expressing his great pleasure at being privileged — in the unavoidable absence of our President, Dr. Schedler — to welcome so many. Thanking most warmly all those who had come from afar, he took the presence of 65 compatriots as proof of our Colony's affection for the Homeland. He bade a specially friendly welcome to Professor K. Schib of Schaffhausen, who had come all the way from Switzerland and thus provided a direct link with our compatriots at home; to Mr. and Mrs. Ammann of Halifax, who had undertaken a 3½ hours motor-coach journey from Yorkshire to represent the Bradford Swiss Club and to bring us their greetings; and last but not least, as he put it, to our Vice-Consul and his family, whom he thanked for their unfailing support of all the Club's activities.

Mr. Heinrich finally read out a letter addressed to the Manchester Swiss Colony by Monsieur H. de Torrenté, our new Swiss Minister in London; his fine message and his promise to visit Manchester as soon as circumstances allowed evoked great satisfaction and was applauded accordingly.

After that he called on our Vice-Consul who read out a message to the Swiss Colonies abroad from Monsieur Petitpierre, the Head of the Federal Political Department, which also received great applause. His proposal to send a reply to our Minister in London, sending both to him and to Monsieur Petitpierre the Manchester Colony's patriotic greetings and assurance of their loyalty to the Homeland, was endorsed unanimously.

Mr. Huber then stressed briefly the significance of to-day's event, commemorating not only the 657th anniversary of the solemn and everlasting Pact of 1291, but marking also the 100th anniversary of the introduction of our federal constitution which has been such an unqualified success and blessing for our land. Addressing himself to Professor Schib, he asked him to take

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home to our beloved country the good wishes of the staunch and patriotic Manchester Swiss Colony for whose loyalty to the Mother Country he could vouch.

He ended with a sincere and well deserved tribute to the Committee of the Manchester Swiss Club, whose excellent team work on behalf of the Colony was appreciated by all; he had a special word of praise for Messrs. Heinrich and Monney, who organised to-day's outing with such care and success.

Professor Schib then rose to deliver an exceedingly fine and well appreciated address. He started by drawing a picture of the National Day celebrations at home, saying that during and since the war the 1st of August was being celebrated in Switzerland in a much more serious mood. Everyone felt a sense of deep gratitude that Switzerland had been spared the misery and ravages of war and the chaos and collapse which it had brought in its trail. What a blessing to be Swiss! and to whom, he asked, are we indebted for our good fortune? Doubtlessly in a large measure to the resolute will to defend ourselves, but perhaps also, he added, to the fact that not only the Pact of 1291, but also the Constitution of 1848, gives first place to the name of God.

After tracing the great improvements in the economic and social life of the country which had taken place during the last 100 years, Professor Schib emphasised the increasing interest and solicitude which our Government and people at home were manifesting for us Swiss abroad. He illustrated this by referring to the continuous extension of the Consular Service during the last 100 years and to the benefits now available to us under the Old Age and Survivors Insurance Scheme. He also emphasised the wisdom of our policy of neutrality which had allowed Switzerland to concentrate on her internal problems. The Swiss State was a state of social progress, but also a state where the individual citizen still had the will and the energy to remain independent and to stand on his own feet.

He paid a fine tribute to the Swiss soldier's patriotism and determination to defend his country against any foe and to the financial sacrifices which our country had made for the defence of its perpetual neutrality. No doubt, he concluded, you Swiss in Great Britain have often had moments of deep anxiety for your Homeland in the years 1940/1941, when Great Britain, through her supreme effort, saved us all. No doubt too, if Switzerland should ever be in danger again, she would be able to count on the moral and material support of her compatriots abroad.

After the well earned applause which Professor Schib's fine and sincere words had evoked, all those assembled rose and sang with feeling the Schweizerpsalm. This was indeed the high moment of a memorable First of August celebration.

After that we had almost an hour's community singing, thanks to the enthusiasm of our excellent young singers' running the whole gamut of popular Swiss songs. It was a most pleasant ending to a perfect day at Southport. Seven o'clock came all too soon, the time when we had to take our seats again in the coaches, to be sped homeward through the Lancashire and Cheshire countryside.

When we separated at last at Piccadilly, Manchester, we had each of us the certainty that the memory of our Bundesfeier 1948 would long remain.

FIRST OF AUGUST CELEBRATION IN LIVERPOOL.

The small Swiss Colony in Liverpool spent a happy evening on the initiative of the Consulate when they met on the 31st inst., to celebrate the 1st of August. It is true, there were only a few veterans present, but how pleased we were to see those faithful ones, whom one always meets at least on our National Day. One who never missed that occasion was Mr. Tüscher, whose death after a long illness, we deplored a few months ago. Many were absent on holiday in Switzerland among them Mr. Schärer, the acting Vice-President, who with his wife sent us greetings by telegram. Mme. Davidson who together with Mme. Schärer had "mothered" the Swiss girls in the past year was also away and all regretted their absence. Mr. Egger, the new Chancellor acted as our host and in a short speech pleaded for more happy reunions. He had arranged the showing of two charming Swiss films which filled our hearts with pride for our country and may be, also a little "Heimweh"! All joined with fervour in the singing of many of our Swiss songs, but none of us was brave enough to get up and thank the many who made the meeting a happy one so to Mr. Egger and Miss Schuster, the Consulate's Secretary, who had worked hard to get us together, to Frl. Glur who gave two charming piano solos, and not the least to the ladies who with much patience and ingenuity cut out a Swiss map which adorned each place, and everybody who joined in our Swiss songs and helped to create that feeling of "Einheitlichkeit" we say *Thank You*.

L.M.

SCHWEIZERBUND (Swiss Club)

74, CHARLOTTE STREET, W.I.

REBUILDING.

The rebuilding of the Club premises has started and from the beginning of September the Club will be closed until further notice.

It will be reopened with a "swing" like the Swiss Evening in the Dorchester, every member will receive due notice as soon as possible.

We shall take this opportunity to reorganise the membership and are glad to say that, since our 1st of August Festivals a number of Swiss and their English friends have applied for membership.

We deserve this support since we have shown in the Dorchester Hotel that the "Swiss spirit" is not dead yet.

Make sure that you have a seat at the reopening of the "Bündnerstube," apply for membership now, no subscriptions are payable until the end of this year but the entrance fee of 20/- for each new member will be a brick for the rebuilding.

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