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SWISS SPORTS AND GARDEN PARTY

AT THE POLYTECHNIC STADIUM, CHISWICK

ON SATURDAY, 22nd MAY, 1954

Everyone knows of the Olympic Games and, in this country at least we have all heard of the Highland Games, but judging by the attendance at the Polytechnic Stadium, Chiswick, on Saturday afternoon, May 22nd not many London compatriots were aware of the SWISS SPORTS, this year in their 26th edition and for the third successive time at their present desirable venue. Still there was an alibi, the weather. On locking the drawers of my City desk I glimpsed a leaden sky, noticed the chilling drizzle and could not repress an instinctive: "Bother Chiswick, it is much cosier round the home fire!" Still my official duties helped me to overcome my disinclination and on arriving was comforted by the fact that some 500 fellow countrymen had performed the same brave deed.

One cannot resist the temptation of a comparison with pre-war meetings at which considerably greater was the number both of spectators and competitors, but those were the halcyon days of the London colony! Far be it from me to pour cold water on the ardour of the organizers who performed creditably despite ever increasing difficulties. On the contrary I would say that they should be encouraged with greater support in maintaining this unique function in the Swiss social round; let us jettison some of the junketings, but keep an event which has real propaganda value for the British-born generations. The attractive programme cover showed a wrestler about to throw his opponent, yet this typically Swiss sport has not been demonstrated for years. In these days of swift air transport it should not be beyond contriving or too costly to bring over two outstanding wrestlers to show us how "Schwingen" is done. This would provide an irresistible attraction.

Withdrawals through indisposition or repatriation somewhat depleted the number of competitors in the purely athletic events, which got off to a good start on the orders of Mr. W. Meier who, in white linen cap and trousers, really looked the part of starter. Whilst no records were broken, there were some outstanding performances and a fine sporting spirit. We append the list of the official results from which it will be seen that the Swiss Mercantile Society entrants won most of the honours with the Unione Ticinese athletes a worthy second and Swiss Bank Corporation a plucky third. *Victor Ludorum* was W. Krättli (S.M.S.). A few incidents of note: L. Jacomelli (U.T.) abandoned in the 880 yds. following a collision with M. Grandchamp (S.M.S.). The latter fell on the track after completing a lap in one of the relay races and had to receive attention from the ambulance men; a similar fate also befell the fleet-footed L. Bernasconi (U.T.) on breasting the line in the 100 yds. final. The Unione Ticinese team sadly missed the services of their leader and President, Peter Jacomelli, with the result that in both relay races the Swiss Mercantile A team were unchallenged after establishing an early lead. The spectators

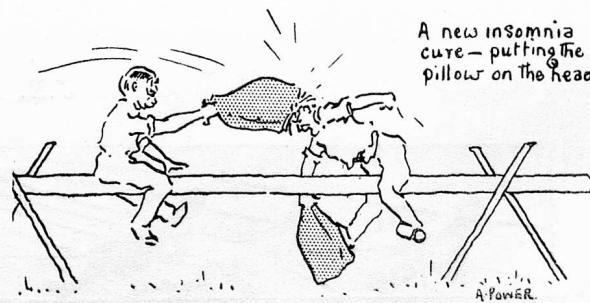
shivering in the Stand longed for the excitement which these events generate especially on this occasion to help them keep warm.

In spite of the untiring efforts of Mrs. W. Meier also the children's flat races were poorly supported, but the youthful competitors made up in zest for their lack of numbers. One ten-year-old about to finish some lengths ahead of his nearest rival hurled an ungentlemanly "Shut up" to the Stand whence cheers of encouragement were being shouted at him. Perhaps misled by the curving white line that crossed the track a diminutive runner in blue school cap and blazer who was well ahead cut across the path of a bunch of competitors and was buried when they fell on top of him as he stumbled. Most of the 6 to 8 year girls finished on the wrong side of the post and the race had to be re-run, but the result only varied to the extent of 2nd and 3rd exchanging places.



Cheers greeted the arrival of the Swiss Minister, accompanied by Madame de Torrenté, and members of the Legation staff. They were received by the President of the Swiss Sports Committee, Mr. R. de Cintra.

They were in time to enjoy some hard hitting by competitors in the Pillow Fight, which provided spills and thrills in plenty. We saw one of the Recorders hit the mat in one fell swoop; an athlete, sleeves of track suit covered in badges grew so bold after his first success that he there and then issued a challenge, but was invited by the judges to descend and await his turn for the next trial. And lo and behold, two gentlemen lashed out at each other with such vigour that they both went flying to the ground. But how different when at the end two young ladies (is this the first time ever?) volunteered to go astride the pole; they smote as hard as they might with no respect for their make-up, but try as they may, they both kept their balance until one admitted: "Machts müed!" and the judges thereupon very chivalrously declared the contest a draw.



More fun was provided by the mixed races, which both for children and for adults were well patronized. In the wheelbarrow race a girl collapsed over her "barrow" boy on passing the line, whilst a tall, fair young lass ran so fast in the "three-legged" to cause both her and her partner to meet the green sward.

By this time proceedings had got fully an hour behind schedule. The once popular 440 yds Veterans' Walking Handicap for the over forties, which in pre-war days attracted a huge field, had this time but a handful of entrants. They were few but good and honest; they delighted the judges by refraining from running.

Great interest was aroused by the Tug-of-War in which this year the Legation entered a team. Our diplomats very nearly proved that they are almost as adept at pulling the rope as they are at pulling strings. The National Tourist Office, however, for the third time in succession showed that they have become just as redoubtable opponents at this pastime as the Cercle Valaisan was before the war, and they have now won outright the cup donated by the latter.

A recent innovation closed the meeting. It was the Roll-the-Bottle race over 25 yds. for the over 50's. needless to say the sprightly competitors accomplished their task so efficiently as to suggest that the handling of the bottle held no mysteries for them.

Some amusing little incidents also enlivened the distribution of prizes performed by Madame de Torrenté with grace and charm. One little girl, overcome by shyness, halfway up the steps, turned on her heels and went back to mummy for further reassurance. A little gentleman doffed his school cap. Many were the prizes awarded and some successful gladiators will now be able to fill their glass cabinet. Amongst the winners were a few "family concerns" or "happy families" as somebody remarked. Disappointment awaited the champion team of the day, the Swiss Mercantile Society, for they could not be presented with the George Dimier Cup. The President explained that the trophy had been stolen, a new one is at present at the engraver's. In our view owing to the low temperature, some 50° the spectators also deserved a prize if only a warm cup of coffee! In future an effort should be made in arranging the meeting some two or three weeks later in the year when the accident of cold weather is much reduced. Not even Mr. Gandon and his accordéonists could warm us up with a brief recital of our folk tunes.

Yet all handicaps notwithstanding we spent a most enjoyable afternoon and are grateful to Mr. R. de Cintra, the President, and the other Committee members, Messrs. A. Schmid jr., R. Chappuis, J. Diviani, E. H. Schlatter, C. Krebs, E. Berti, W. Burren and W. Meier and all their assistants for their untiring efforts in making this sports rally a success.

J.E.

Results.

High Jump:

1st: F. Schnorf, 2nd: K. Steiner, 3rd: U. J. Meier.

Long Jump:

1st: K. Steiner, 2nd: W. Krättli, 3rd: U. J. Meier.

100 Yards Men:

1st: W. Krättli, 2nd: L. Bernasconi, 3rd: K. Steiner.

80 Yards Boys and Girls:

Boys, 13, 14, 15, years: 1st: P. Ansermoz, 2nd: J. Cole.

Girls 13, 14, 15 years: 1st: V. Slade, 2nd: O. Nodirolli.

Boys 11, 12 years: 1st: R. Anghieri, 2nd: N. Slade, 3rd: Peter Meier.

Girls 11, 12 years: 1st: V. Fischer, 2nd: J. Herbert.

Boys 9, 10 years: 1st: Tony Fischer, 2nd: G. Hediger, 3rd: M. Bader.

Girls 9, 10 years: 1st: E. A. Meier, 2nd: F. Hill, 3rd: M. Bonnet.

880 Yards Men:

1st: H. H. Fehlmann, 2nd: M. Grandchamp, 3rd: F. Bürgisser.

Pillow Fight:

1st: A. Rossier, 2nd: G. Senglet, 3rd: W. Bachmann.

50 Yards Boys and Girls:

Boys 6, 7, 8 years: 1st: Peter Senn, 2nd: Peter Schmid, 3rd: Roger Stettler.

Girls 6, 7, 8 years: 1st: A. Burgazzi, 2nd: B. Herbert, 3rd: S. Rutishauser.

Boys under 6 years: 1st: David Broadhurst, 2nd: Roy Milani, 3rd: M. Fischer.

Girls under 6 years 1st. Race: 1st: G. Slade, 2nd: H. Senn, 3rd: F. Bury.

2nd. Race: 1st: M. Fischer, 2nd: P. Meier, 3rd: V. Mundy.

100 Yards Ladies:

1st: Miss R. Schärer, 2nd: Miss U. Trech, 3rd: Miss B. Geissbühler.

Mixed Races:

Three-Legged-Race:

Children 12, 13, 14 years: 1st. pair: G. Mock, J. Herbert, 2nd pair: P. & E. Meier.

3rd. pair: V. Fischer, H. Mock.

Children 10, 11 years: 1st. pair: B. Wiseman, B. Dubelbeiss, 2nd. pair: M. Fischer, S. Krugel, 3rd. pair: S. Reverdin, W. De Rahm.

Children 8, 9 years: 1st. pair: A. Bürgazzi, B. Begg, 2nd pair: P. Schmid, C. —

Mixed Races:

Adults: 1st. pair: Mr. and Mrs. Slade, 2nd. pair: Mr. & Mrs. Mundy, 3rd. pair: Mr. F. Bassi and Mrs. M. Fischer.

440 Yards Veterans' Handicap:

1st: W. Stettbacher, 2nd: D. Bonnet, 3rd: C. Slade. (Win the Challenge Cup).



4 x 110 Yards Relay Race:

1st: Swiss Mercantile Society, 2nd: Unione Ticinese, 3rd: Swiss Bank Corporation.

Wheelbarrow Race:

Children: 1st. Race 1st. pair: T. and V. Fischer, 2nd. pair: V. and N. Slade, 3rd. pair: A. Mock and J. Herbert.

2nd. Race 1st. pair: F. Hill and M. Bonnet, 2nd. pair: S. Sutch and E. A. Meier, 3rd. pair: J. Mansbridge and W. Wiseman.

3rd. Race 1st. pair: B. Dubelbeiss and M. Delany, 2nd. pair: R. Stettler and S. Rutishauser, 3rd. pair: A. Rose and B. Herbert.

Adults: 1st. Race 1st. pair: P. Ansermoz and Miss H. Meier, 2nd. pair: F. Bassi and J. Povey, 3rd. pair: C. Slade and B. Slade.

Thread-and-Needle Race:

Children: 1st. Race 1st. pair: R. Anghileri and Maureen Berti, 2nd. pair: P. and E. Meier, 3rd. pair: Tony Fischer and S. Herbert.

Adults: 1st. Race 1st. pair: Miss Meier and Mr. Ansermoz, 2nd. pair: Mr. and Miss Slade, 3rd. pair: Miss Geissbühler and Mr. Costa.

Cigarette Race:

Adults: 1st. Race 1st. pair: Miss Watson and Mr. Rossier, 2nd. pair: Mr. and Mrs. Mundy, 3rd. pair: Miss Blackwell and Mr. Senglet.

220 Yards Men:

1st: L. Bernasconi, 2nd: W. Krättli, 3rd: H. Wild.

Rolling-out-the-Bottle:

1st: A. W. Sommer, 2nd: J. Huber, 3rd: Dr. E. M. Bircher.

Tug-O'-War:

*Winner: Swiss National Tourist Office; Runners up: Swiss Legation.

*Win the "Cercle Valaisan Challenge Cup" outright.

One Mile Relay Race:

1st: *Swiss Mercantile Society "A", 2nd: Unione Ticinese.

*Pagani Cup.

The Athlete who scored the *highest number* of points was Mr. W. Krättli of the Swiss Mercantile Society.

The "George Dimier Challenge Cup" awarded to the Swiss Society or Subscribing Firm scoring the highest number of points in athletic events was won by the Swiss Mercantile Society.

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