

# The "Landsgemeinde" of the Swiss Clubs

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): **- (1956)**

Heft 1277

PDF erstellt am: **27.04.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-691438>

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## THE "LANDSGEMEINDE" OF THE SWISS CLUBS.

of Bradford, Leeds, Manchester and Nottingham at Hardcastle Crag (Yorkshire) on June 17th, 1956.

On the Sunday morning of June 17th very heavy clouds and rain greeted the early risers in Manchester, and the prospects for a bright day looked rather gloomy. Nevertheless a goodly number of Swiss from all the northern Clubs gathered at the Hebden Bridge Memorial Gardens at the appointed hour, some arriving by train, others by car, where we were welcomed by the Chairman of the Hebden Bridge Urban Council, Mr. Lord. This opportunity was made good use of for selling the customary 1st August emblems.

With the skies still grey, but without rain, the party set off over the little old humpback bridge towards the footpath to the Hardcastle Crag. Even now the Hebden Valley looked beautiful with the newly washed greenery of the woods above the rushing river, and as the long column of the wanderers wound its way towards the height, well-known songs, joyous "Yuchzer" and merry laughter echoed along its way. In less than an hour the "Cosy Corner Café" was reached and here the company settled down to its well earned picnic lunch. As on some previous occasions, these proceedings were for some moments slightly damped by a fine drizzle, but the weather-hardy Swiss took little notice of this.

After lunch most of the members struggled manfully up the now rather slippery rocks to the top where a cold, biting wind prevented a long stay, especially as the view was rather restricted by scurrying clouds.

Two o'clock saw the gathering of the "Landsgemeinde" proper on the meadow beside the Cosy Corner Café where well over one hundred of our compatriots formed the customary circle. The president of the Manchester club, Mr. Monney conducted the meeting.

In opening the "Landsgemeinde" he first of all read a message from Prof. Inebnit, regretting his unavoidable absence. He had unexpectedly been called to Paris to take part in a television programme

this day and so sent his warmest wishes by letter. Then a letter was read from the Swiss Minister in London, Mr. A. Daeniker, in which he referred to his visit of last year, and expressed his and Madame Daeniker's regret that they were unable to take part in the event this year.

"Rufst Du mein Vaterland" then preceded the calling up of the citizens of each canton in historical order of joining the Confederation.

This year some half-dozen of Cantons were not represented, especially those of the Inner-Cantons, but the number of individual participants was if anything greater than last year. The proceedings were ended by the whole community singing "Tritt's im Morgenrot daher".

The return to Hebden Bridge took us down the steep slope to the well-known "Stepping Stones" across the Hebden Waters, where a short halt was made under the spreading trees to allow the stragglers to close up, before the ascent to the high road which led us back to Hebden Bridge along the northern hillside of the valley. The weather had now cleared up and blue sky greeted us as we came into the full view of the district which is called "little Switzerland".

At the "Civic Hall" in Hebden Bridge, newly renovated and furnished, about 140 members of the various colonies sat down to a very enjoyable High Tea. No sooner was this sumptuous Yorkshire repast over, than the chairman, Mr. Büchi, our Consul for this part of England, opened the proceedings.

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It is the custom at these Colony Meetings that the chair is taken by a president of one of the participating Swiss Clubs in rotation, but as this was the first appearance of our new Consul at a "Landsgemeinde" it was felt fitting that as he is the official head of our various colonies he would be our ideal chairman. Consequently, on rising, Mr. Büchi received a very warm welcome from the whole gathering.

He extended a special welcome to Mrs. Davidson, President of the Swiss Relief Society in Liverpool, and to Dr. Schweizer, President of the newly formed Swiss Club in Nottingham, who joined us for the first time. He then greeted the Presidents of the Bradford, Leeds and the Manchester Clubs, Messrs Illi and Monney respectively. He also expressed appreciation of the visit from our old special friend, the late President of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, London Group, Mr. A. F. Suter and Mrs. Suter.

Mr. Büchi spoke of his and our regret at the absence of Prof. Inebnit, who has been the life and soul of all our "Landsgemeinden", but was very glad to see Mrs. Inebnit and her two daughters amongst us. Finally he specially welcomed the chairman of the Hebden Bridge Urban Council, Mr. Lord, and Mrs. Lord, who kindly had accepted our invitation to join us for tea.

In a few sentences Mr. Büchi then referred to the significance of the "Landsgemeinde", which stands for the purest and most direct democracy and said:—

"that if today's gathering has afforded us the opportunity of meeting many of our compatriots, of renewing friendships and of making new friends, and if it has given rise to the feeling of unity amongst us as well as a renewal of the bond that ties us to our beloved fatherland, then indeed has the purpose of this unique meeting on foreign soil been achieved".

He then asked the gathering to sing a verse of "Oh, mein Heimatland".

Following, Mrs. Davidson was asked to address the meeting, and she was followed by Mr. Suter and Dr. Schweizer. Finally the Chairman of the Hebden Bridge Urban Council, Mr. Lord, expressed his pleasure at our visit to his native place and mentioned that he was only sorry he had not been able to show us himself some of the historic places of the district.

All too soon the evening drew to its close and after all the farewells had been said, everyone left Hebden Bridge with the fervent wish that the next "Landsgemeinde" will give us a further opportunity to spend a happy day amongst the Yorkshire hills and our friends from all over the North.

*Ebro.*

### SWISS CLUB, DUNFERMLINE.

A reception and supper in honour of Consul and Madame M. E. Buechi was held on the 19th June. Our compatriots came to Castleblair Works Canteen on Tuesday 19th June 1956, to meet our Consul.

On behalf of the members, our President Mr. Frick extended a most warm welcome to Consul and Madame Buechi and also to our Honorary Members, Consul Hofstetter and Mr. W. O. Bosshardt.

After a delicious supper, Consul Buechi addressed the company and expressed his delight at meeting the compatriots of Dunfermline. He assured us that he will give his help and assistance to anyone should we ever require his advice. "It is my desire to keep in close touch with 'my Swiss Family'" said Mr. Buechi. Through personal contact and exchange of views we shall get a friendly and happy atmosphere.

Both Consul Hofstetter and our President replied and thanked Consul and Madame Buechi for the trouble they have taken to come so far North to meet the small "flock" at Dunfermline. All members were most delighted to meet them both. It is hoped that we shall have them with us again some day soon.

Many discussions on personal matters followed between Consul Buechi and our members. A few Swiss Songs and a solo recital by Mr. Rudi Lussi rounded off a very pleasant evening.

*B.*

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