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SWISS BOXERS IN LONDON.

In the past, the Swiss Colony in Great Britain has had the visits of many Clubs and Societies from our homeland, such as Football Clubs, Yodling and singing choirs, as well as of eminent artists both in the singing and musical sphere.

To my knowledge only twice have members of the boxing fraternity performed in this country, and I am sorry to say, with no success whatsoever.

I am happy to say that this spell of misfortune has at last been broken, when a team of eight members from the Boxing Club, Lucerne, met a team of the Lyons Club, Boxing section, on Monday, May 7th, at the Windsor Room of the Coventry Street Corner House in a friendly Inter-Team Boxing Contest, which ended in a draw (4-4).

Not being an expert on this special kind of sport, I nevertheless accepted the kind invitation extended to me by the Lyons Boxing Club. My knowledge of boxing is of recent date, and has been principally acquired by watching amateur and professional matches on Television, and whenever the respective commentators announced "that blood is now flowing freely", I used to switch off, not wishing to witness "such a bloody affair".

I have in my younger years experienced some kind of boxing which however hardly comes into the same category as that which I watched the other day. My various school teachers had made it a habit of boxing my ears, and this "sport" was also practised occasionally at my home; unfortunately in all these cases I was not allowed to retaliate, no wonder then that I looked somewhat askance at the noble sport of boxing.

But having witnessed this last contest of our countrymen at Coventry Street, I have — rather late in life — become a boxing enthusiast, although I have not the slightest inclination to enter the ring to have my face "interfered" with.

At this boxing encounter, I am sorry to say, "blood was flowing too" occasionally on both sides, but in spite of this the contest was conducted in true sportsmanship manner with no loss of temper, which sometimes one experiences in professional boxing, and if here and there a boxer had to be warned by the referee, it was principally due more to over eagerness than to the intention to "hit below the belt" which can easily be excused considering the boxers were of amateur status.

* * *

Before the contest started I was introduced at the ring-side to Mr. Fuchs, the Swiss team manager, who, on being told that I am a Bernese, bred and born, told me promptly that we Bernese have "stolen" the Swiss Capital from the "Luzerner", a fact which I admit I did not know. One lives and learns. I told him that I was sorry for this happening, which could hardly be blamed on to me, as I was not there when this "theft" occurred, I also mentioned to him, that the "Luzerner" are quite welcome to make a claim for restoration, as then we Bernese would in future not always be blamed for what is decided in Berne, by non-Bernese.

After this short interlude, savouring of "Kantönligeist" from which we Swiss never can get away for long, the two teams entered the ring amidst the ringing of cow-bells, to be introduced to each other and to the large audience. The Swiss team consisted of the following: Markus Widmer (19), Swiss Junior

Champion; Ernst Krenzak (22), Josef Imboden (19), Helmut Nollenberger (24), Werner Bösch (24), Walter Totzauer (24), Hans Büechi (28), Swiss finalist, and Walter Tietsch (30), Swiss champion, 1956.

The English team was as follows: A. Gregory (22), Lyons; J. Simmons, Rotax; D. Clempson (20), Lyons; P. Nolan (23), Lyons; K. Gannon (24) (Lyons); M. Dean (24), Lyons; F. Scullin (22), Lyons; J. Harris (Battersea), and J. Smith, Poly.

The Swiss team was smartly "gowned" in blue silk dressing gowns having the name "Boxing Club, Luzern" embroidered on the back. As a friendly gesture the members of the Swiss team presented each of their opponents with a little Swiss pennon and a booklet, which evoked hearty applause from the audience.

Space at my disposal does not allow me to describe each bout separately, but it is sufficient to say that the result of a draw was fair and square. The boxing was without exception, of a high standard, and considering that Switzerland has only in recent years taken up boxing in earnest, the result, as far as the Swiss team is concerned, can be termed as highly satisfactory.

The Swiss winners were: J. Imboden, W. Boelsch, H. Büechi and W. Totzauer, and the English winners were the following: A. Gregory, J. Simmons, J. Harris, and R. Shaw.

Walter Rietsch (Swiss champion) was outpointed by Bob Shaw, England and London representative.

At the close of the contest, the Chairman of the Lyons Boxing Club, Mr. Rex Joseph, entered the ring to express in a few words, the pleasure of having had for the first time in the history of the Club, the visit of a foreign team, and thanked the members of the Boxing Club, Lucerne for their fine sportsmanship. He was followed by Mr. Fuchs, the Manager of the Swiss team, who in his turn expressed the satisfaction of his fellow countrymen for the way in which this contest had been conducted, and made a presentation of a silk gown to the best boxer of the evening, an Englishman, and would you believe it, accompanied by a large bouquet of flowers, which shows that boxers have not only hard fists, but also soft hearts.

A supper then was offered to both teams and guests in the Brasserie, and scrutinising the faces of the competitors, I noticed with pleasure that they were "quite normal".

In concluding this report I would like to express my appreciation to Mr. L. W. Burrell, Press Officer, for having given me an opportunity of witnessing this fine contest where good sportsmanship was such a distinguished feature.

ST.

