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SWISS CLUB MANCHESTER.**Visit to Renold Chains Works at Burnage & Lecture
by M. Jean P. Inebnit.**

During the first fortnight of March two very interesting and instructive functions were held.

On Thursday afternoon, 7th March, a number of members were invited by Mr. O. Bertoya, Managing Director of Renold Chains Ltd., to visit their Manchester works at Burnage. We were received by three members of the management in a spacious and pleasantly fitted reception lounge. Mr. Davies, Establishment Manager, who has been with the firm for 47 years, gave us a history of the foundation and development of the firm, by our compatriot Hans Renold, born in 1852 at Aarau, a town that had seen his family as burghers for several generations. At the age of 21 he decided to come to England, but he had previously worked as draughtsman with a firm of Engineers at St. Denis, north of Paris. It is interesting to relate that the testimony given him on his departure, in 1873, states: "It is our opinion that Mr. Renold will perform positive services to the mechanical-engineering industry". A true prophecy!

In England Hans Renold tried his luck first in London, without success. So he came North to the Industrial part of the country and was first in the employ of the firm Felber-Jucker, in their Textile Machinery export department. Later he entered into partnership with a man named Calvert, also for the export of Textile machinery. This was a disappointment. Finally, in 1879 he decided to start as an inventor and manufacturer of precision chains. From this very modest beginning has evolved the huge business that employs to-day several thousands of workers, with works in Manchester and in Coventry, and some ramifications in South Wales.

Hans Renold was a genius in mechanics and his inventions, mostly concerned with improvements to the cycle chain, made cycling safe and are responsible for the enormous advance of this type of transport. Apart from the perfection of chains, Hans Renold has also been concerned with perfection in the Welfare of his workers. In this sphere Renold has been a pioneer and the amenities provided for social activities, sport and comforts are simply amazing.

We were conducted through the works in three separate parties and have seen the machines at work and marvelled at the precision of these enormous

mechanical devices. We were especially impressed by the minute check of absolutely every single item of the production. It is no wonder that Renold's products are reputed as perfect and that the Ministry of Civil Aviation will accept Renold's Control as sufficient, without their insisting on a further test; a compliment to a firm of real quality chainmakers but indeed a very rare occurrence.

We saw the making of chains of all imaginable sizes, from very tiny almost toy-like chains to huge and heavy chains for the Navy. Most are of the Bush roller type that is used for cycle chains.

One of the most fascinating parts of the visit was the Machine shop where all these precision machines are mounted and even made. It is really automation in its most up-to-date version.

After the visit to the works, Mr. Bertoya received us personally at the old residence of Hans Renold, on the hill above the works, which is now a Club house for the employees of the firm. He welcomed us on behalf of Sir Charles Renold, the Chairman of the Company and eldest son of Hans Renold, who was unfortunately unable to be with us. An excellent tea was then served, with everything prepared in the kitchen of the works canteen, and a real wonder this tea consisted of, with scones and cakes as good as one could get in Switzerland. On leaving we were each given a book published last year giving the history of the Company and the Rise of the Precision Chain Industry, and the ladies were further each given a box of chocolates.

The second function, on Thursday, 14th March, was a lecture by our Hon. Member M. Jean P. Inebnit. His subject this time was "L'Abbé Pierre et son oeuvre". The attendance was not good, which is surprising for a talk by J. P. Inebnit. At the previous monthly meeting a vote was taken to decide whether this lecture should be in French or in English. The division was nearly equal, so much so that a second count was insisted upon by the members who wanted the lecture in French. Now what I am driving at is this: The vote was for the lecture to be in English. BUT most of the members who voted for English DID NOT COME to the lecture. Is this a responsible way to act? Democracy is all very well, but one must be fit for it and in the case in question those who did not intend to come to the lecture should — in my humble opinion — have abstained from voting, thus giving the chance to the other side.

H.M.

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SWISS CLUB MANCHESTER. Visit of "La Chanson de Gruyère".

From midday on Sunday, 31st March, to the following Wednesday morning the Swiss Club Manchester had the privilege and pleasure of entertaining the "Choeur Mixte de Bulle" visiting this Country for the "Fête Suisse" in London as "La Chanson de Gruyère".

The forty-five singers and dancers were accompanied by M. Pierre Glasson, Conseiller d'Etat for the Canton of Fribourg, with Madame Glasson, and by Dr. Joseph Pasquier, Mayor of Bulle.

A few of us met the main party, who had travelled from London Airport by Motor coach, Blake-well in Derbyshire. Lunch was served at a reputed Derbyshire hostelry, the Waterloo Hotel at Taddington. The host had provided a typical English festival fare of Roast Turkey and Plum Pudding. We then continued the journey to Manchester, passing through Buxton, the well-known Spa, over Long Hill — really a mountain pass — and reaching the Midland Hotel shortly after 3 o'clock.

With just time for changing into traditional Gruyère costume our visitors were then introduced to representatives of the local Press, after which followed a "Get-together-meeting" with members and friends of the Swiss Colony in Manchester and district. Several lovely songs of the Gruyère were produced, a fortaste of the concert to be given on the following Tuesday.

Our President, Mr. H. Monney, who also comes from the Canton of Fribourg, welcomed our visitors on behalf of the Swiss Club and expressed our gratitude for the honour conferred on us by pursuing their visit to England as far north as Manchester. He elaborated for a few moments on the beauties of the Gruyère and the unconquerable character and charm of its inhabitants, which are their most endearing qualities.

M. Pierre Glasson answered by a short but very appropriate speech received with acclamation.

After a break, used by many for refreshment in the Hotel lounge, we met again in the "Lancaster Room", where an excellent dinner was served. The tables were decorated with red and white flowers, as is customary for our banquets.

After the Toasts proposed by our President, to "The Queen, Duke of Lancaster" and "La Gruyère et La Suisse", Mr. Max Büchi, in his capacity of Swiss Consul and speaking in French, again welcomed our guests, telling them that the renown of Gruyère is already acquired here by its famous produce, although here it is the Emmenthal from beyond the Sarine that is honoured with the name of the picturesque region of Gruyère. He assured them that the bad reputation of Manchester's inclement climate and smoky sky is offset by the beauty of the countryside and especially by the graciousness and hospitality of the inhabitants.

Now M. Ch. Gaillard, President of the "Choeur Mixte de Bulle", thanks M. Büchi for his welcome and makes a presentation to the Swiss Club of a magnificent bronze "Chaudron de Gruyère" filled with chocolates and other delicacies, and, to our President and our Consul, of wooden "Baquets à crème" and spoons, also filled with chocolates.

Yet another speech, by Dr. Joseph Pasquier, the genial Mayor of Bulle, full of good humour, is received with thunderous applause.

The next morning, at 11 o'clock, a courtesy call was made on the Lord Mayor of Manchester, Councillor Harry Sharp, J.P., and the Lady Mayoress. The reception was held in the Lord Mayor's Parlour and for the best part of half an hour the Town Hall resounded with the lovely melodies of Gruyère. Again, a bronze "Chaudron de Gruyère" was afterwards presented — to the Lord Mayor through the good offices of our Consul.

As there was time to spare before lunch at the restaurant of Messrs. Kendal Milne & Co., where the "Chanson" was performing that evening in support of a Swiss fashion show, we paid a quick visit to Manchester Cathedral. After lunch a leisurely outing was made to Wythenshawe Park and its Elizabethan Hall. The fashion show at Kendal's, attended by many of our members, was a great success and was a joy to both ear and eye.

And now Tuesday. First a tour by Coach of some parts of Cheshire nearest to Manchester. After passing through the old market town of Altrincham, we branched off the main Chester Road to see the picturesque villages of Rostherne and Prestbury with a halt "en route" on the summit of Alderley Edge, reaching eventually Lyme Park with its herds of deer grazing in complete freedom. A typical English lunch, served in the stately dining room of Lyme Hall, was followed by some songs. It was then dis-



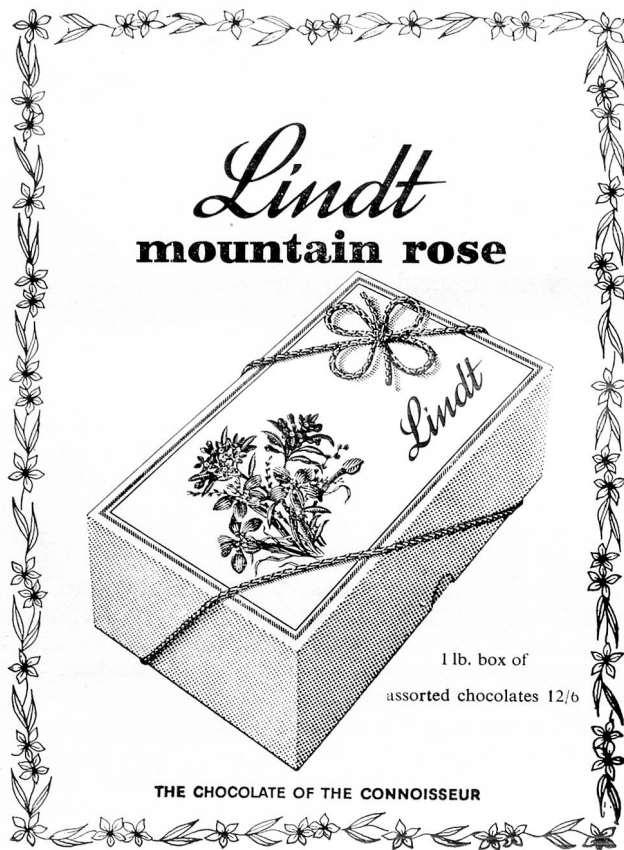
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covered that the acoustics of the room were exceptionally good, so songs of greater delicacy were given, notably "Le Pinson des bois". A visit to the famous gardens adjoining the Hall was inevitable. At the sight of the well-trimmed and green lawns, the temptation for a dance was too great. So "A Molejon" was intoned and the folk dance given with great zest.

Back in Manchester, after a couple of hours' rest and a copious tea served at the Y.M.C.A., we went to the Houldsworth Hall where the public concert was timed for 7 o'clock.

The attendance appeared quite large. In fact it was not quite sufficient as the same evening the French Ambassador was also in Manchester and the whole French Colony attended their own function, and also the Viennese Boys' Choir, well known from previous visits, was performing the following Friday in Manchester. All these things competed with one another.

Nevertheless the "Chanson de Gruyère" was an enormous success, both artistically and musically. The enthusiasm of the audience was evidenced by prolonged applause. The singing, under the masterly direction of M. P. A. Gaillard, was a sheer delight.

The solo part by M. Paul Bersier, introducing the "Ranz des Vaches", was in such a clear and pure tenor that it will be remembered a long time. The pianist, Madame Marie-Louise Boy de la Tour, had already played two short but charming pieces by Mendelssohn and the audience had listened in awed silence and was now aware that this concert was one of great accomplishment and of great musical perfection rather than of just popularity. The soloist,

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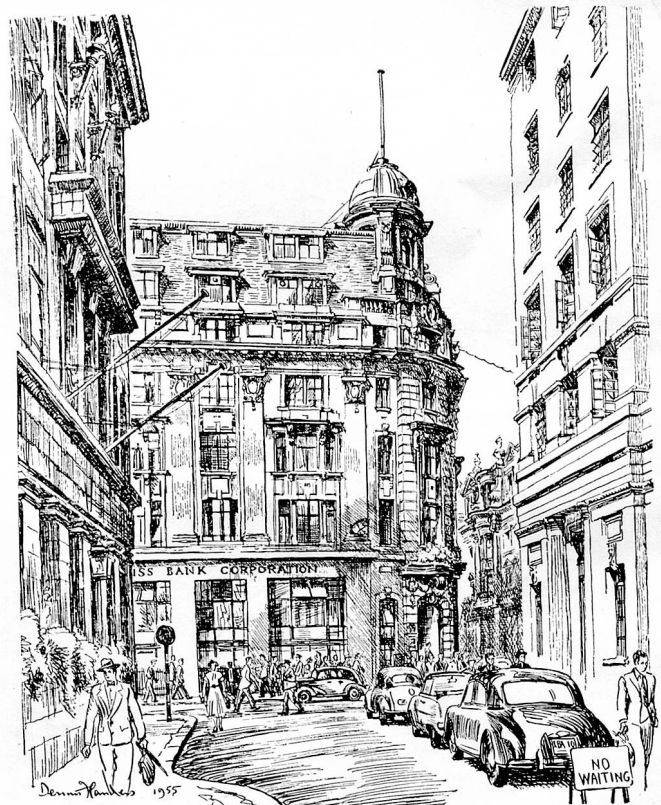
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M. Claude Gafner, gave the Dalcroze songs with the right well balanced rhythm that is so typically Dalcroze. The "Shepherd's Song" from the Fête des Vignerons, on the other hand, was a little monotonous without the setting of a flock of sheep and in the open air, but was appreciated as of great interest to many who could not be at Vevey in 1955.

It is impossible, in a concert with everything so very well performed, to pick out any particular item for special comment. So I shall just quote some of the press reports from the next day's papers.

The Manchester Evening News, under the heading "Charm and Colour", remarks that "the singing was given with spirit and unity. . . there was a simple and expressive charm about the folk dancing that was quite engaging".

The Manchester Evening Chronicle remarks "the singers and dancers in Swiss costume made magic of their songs. . . the unaccompanied singing was a rare delight".

And the Daily Telegraph, that I shall quote a little more fully, said:

" . . . Interest lay as much in its visual as in its vocal aspect. The picturesque costumes, and the folk dances, which overcame severe staging limitations, formed a fascinating background to the simple, unsophisticated music-making. Within the bounds of their own sphere these 45 artists, under P. A. Gaillard's direction, are well worth hearing. The unaccompanied part-singing was admirable, whether the folk-songs mood was piquant, placid or melancholy. The pianist, Madame Marie-Louise Boy de la Tour, earned the thanks of the more experienced music lovers in the audience, by introducing three of the powerful, uncompromising preludes of Frank Martin, the most significant Swiss composer of the day".

In addition to the items on the programme there were four songs, among them "Le Pinson des Bois", a real gem, at the request of our Consul, M. Max Büchi.

And now all is over. The impression remains of having experienced a few hours of great joy. It is like a wonderful dream and we wish we could close our eyes and have it all over again. Our thanks go to the "Chanson de Gruyère" for giving us such pleasure.

Our thanks go also to all our members and friends who have generously given accommodation for our visitors. Without such help it would be impossible ever to attempt such ventures.

H.M.



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