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THE 27th "LANDSGEMEINDE"

The 27th "Landsgemeinde" at Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire was, for some 100 Swiss participants, a most enjoyable occasion. It climaxed a Swiss Week, organised by a joint committee of the Calderdale communities, blessed by sunshine and renewals of old friendships.

Hebden Bridge looked its very best, with its picturesque main street beflagged with new bunting and strings of coloured lights, the shop windows beautifully decorated and displaying in many forms the Swiss theme.

Publicity for the event had been considerably stepped up this year, and, undoubtedly due to a television programme highlighting Swiss Week, quite a few first-time visitors could be spotted.

The Little Theatre was filled to capacity on Thursday evening for the film show that included two most interesting films about Switzerland, kindly provided by the Swiss National Tourist Office, and an excellent film about the Calderdale was also appreciated.

While some technical hitch was being dealt with by the experts, Joe Bradley, an elderly local character showed some slides taken over many years, and his humorous commentary in down-to-earth Yorkshire dialect was one of the highlights of the evening.

On Saturday morning the happy crowds thronged around the market stalls set up by the ladies in aid of charities, and in St George's Square the young people's band gave a concert.

Nearby, in one of the schoolrooms, Swiss arts and crafts, as well as written compositions done by the local schoolchildren, were displayed to the public and judged by one of the Swiss visitors.

The best pieces of work were later taken to the Civic Hall, to be seen by the Swiss visitors and the representatives of the Parish Councils.

The day concluded with wine and cheese accompanied by taped Swiss music.

NEWS FROM THE COLONY

Sunday morning saw the arrival of compatriots from various parts of the country, easily recognisable by the adornment carried in their buttonholes: this year's First of August emblem, taking the unusual form of a little red book, containing the flags of the Swiss cantons in the order of their entry into the Confederation.

For the official welcome the charming Lady Mayor from Halifax, headed a most distinguished group of local dignitaries, wearing their golden chains of office and including two 'Lady Chairmen'.

The forward-looking people of the Calderdale are serious about the equality of men and women, and one could not help but be struck by the fact that most of the speeches at the reception were given by lady officials.

The actual "Landsgemeinde" was held as usual on a lovely meadow surrounded by the woods at Hardcastle Crags. Once the family picnic was over, the acting "Landamann", Jean Inebnit of Leeds, gathered the friends in the council ring and reminded the meeting of some of the important factors connected with the taking shape of the Swiss Confederation.

He called the citizens of the various cantons into the ring, and many

friendships of Swiss in England have taken their beginning on this little meadow.

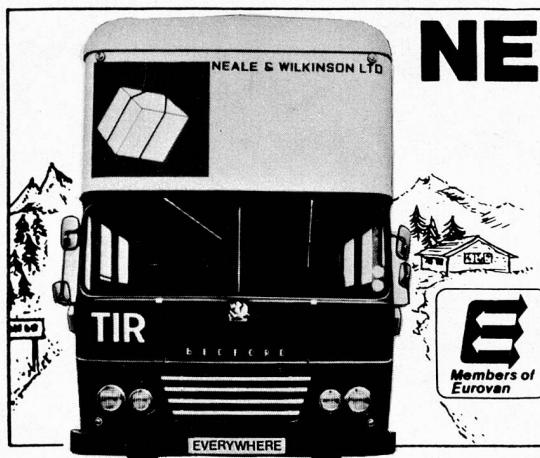
The 27th Landsgemeinde marks a turning point: following last year's recommendation and befitting the difficult times in which we live, a more serious note was introduced by the suggestion to the participants to discuss a matter considered pertinent, on this first occasion the question of voting rights of the Swiss abroad in their land of origin.

It was a pleasure to hear the views, forcefully expressed, by participants stepping into the ring to make their contribution.

In assessing the sense of the meeting, the "Landamann" very ably brought a rather controversial discussion to a harmonious conclusion, with the "Landsgemeinde" recommending a special meeting to be convened in the autumn to look into the matter more thoroughly, and – it is hoped – to make preparations for next year's gathering, which promises to become an event not to be missed.

The lively discussions taking place during high tea at the Civic Hall following the "Landsgemeinde" indicated that this first attempt to introduce the element of consultation on matters of relevance into these yearly gatherings has succeeded and, if proper preparations precede such future occasions, and if the dignity of a real Landsgemeinde can be safeguarded, deliberations in such beautiful surroundings could prove most helpful in strengthening the links between the Swiss in England and their land of origin, while at the same time planting the seed of the ancient practice of direct democracy in a land that cherishes the same ideals of human rights, freedom and justice as do the people of the Helvetic Confederation.

Could this not be a very timely contribution that Switzerland would make to the world community through its goodwill ambassadors abroad, the citizens who for various reasons, have made their home away from home?



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A Member of the Constantine Group

Swiss all over the world are celebrating the centenary of Dr C. G. Jung, one of the eminent "fathers" of psychoanalysis.

In London the event was marked by a private reception on Wednesday 18 June which preceded a public exhibition which remained open to the public until 5 July.

Our Ambassador, Dr Albert Weitnauer, graciously consented to act as host to the reception.

The guest speakers included some of the most famous names in analytical psychology alive today.

A fuller report will appear in the August edition of the *Swiss Observer*.

The Society held its last meeting before the summer recess at Swiss House on Wednesday 11 June.

On opening the proceedings, the Chairman, Mr. A. Jaccard, extended a cordial welcome to Monsieur W. Reutlinger, Swiss Consul, and Madame Reutlinger.

Reporting on the deliberations at the Delegates' Meeting of the SKV in Berne on 30 and 31 May, which he and the Secretary, Mr W. Burren, had attended as representatives of the London Section, the Chairman stated that the present economic recession in Switzerland had figured prominently on the agenda. Steps to combat its repercussions as far as feasible, both short and long term, were discussed at some length.

At subsequent private meetings in Berne with officials of the SKV and the Government, matters affecting the College had been discussed at length and full support could be expected.

Mr Burren then had the pleasant duty of informing the SMS meeting that the Honorary Membership of the Central Society had been conferred on Mr Jaccard in recognition of his outstanding services to the SMS and its College, as President during the past 12 years and previously as Chairman of the Education Committee.

In presenting the certificate commemorating the occasion and a pewter tankard suitably inscribed, the President of the SKV, Mr R. Maier-Neff,

had expressed special thanks to Mr Jaccard for his sustained efforts during the protracted negotiations in connection with the purchase and rebuilding of Swiss House.

The honour bestowed on Mr Jaccard was received with enthusiastic and prolonged applause by the delegates from all over Switzerland assembled at the Kursaal in Berne.

In his address of thanks, Mr Jaccard stated that not only he, but the whole of the London Section had been honoured, especially his colleagues on the Council and the Committees, who had supported him in all his endeavours throughout his period of office. Although London had devoted all its efforts to the realisation of the project, the financial means had to the largest extent been provided from Swiss sources and he expressed appreciation to all who had contributed there towards the success of the venture, notably the Federal Government, the SKV, its Sections and members, as well as private sources, including banking, trade and industry and numerous individual donors.

All the members present at the monthly meeting were delighted with the news and suitably toasted the recipient of this signal honour.

As customary, it was decided to suspend members' meetings during July and August. The next monthly meeting will, consequently, be held on Wednesday 10 September.

The annual family outing was fixed

Swiss Mercantile Society - London

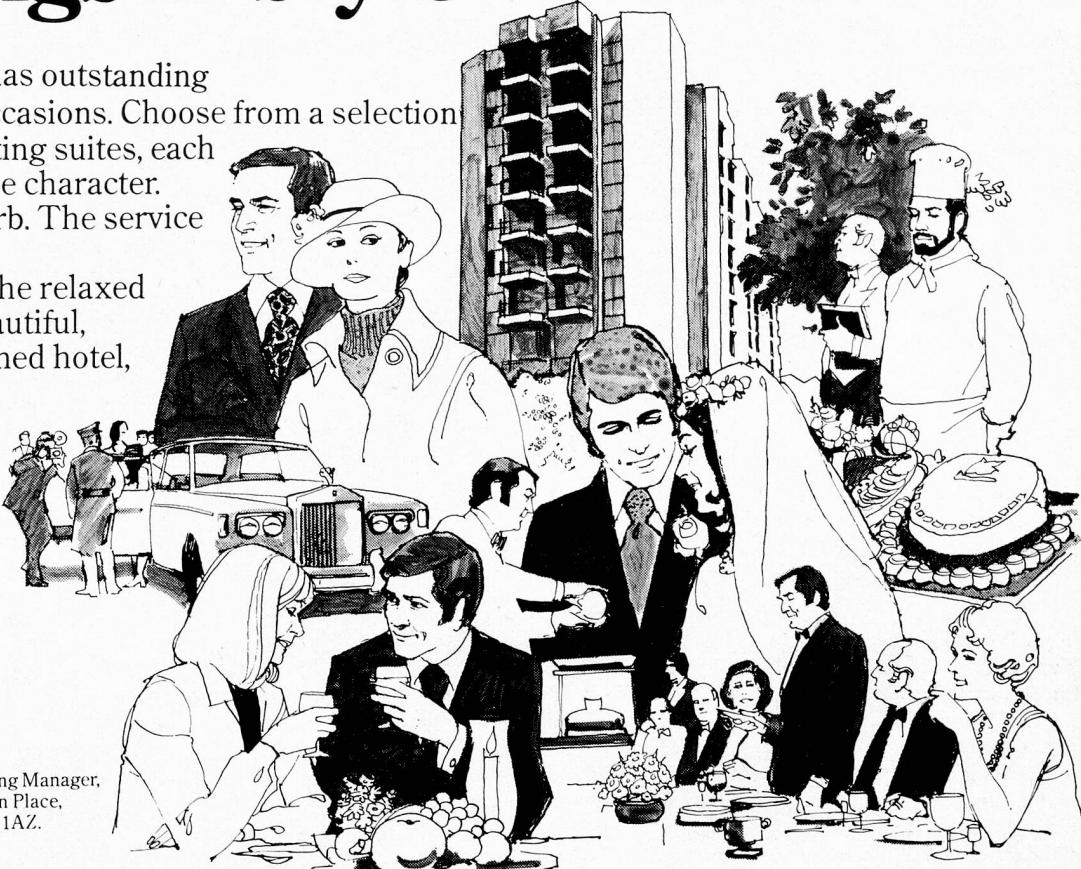
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