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Despite that Tower, this is Crystal Palace, not Paris

Baton belles make a big

INTERNATIONAL travel is something which top class athletes must take in their stride these days. But a visit to England was still an exciting event for 15 young ladies from Meyrin who came to represent their home town at Crystal Palace this summer.

The girls were members of the Meyribelles, a majorette and baton twirling team, who came to compete in the European Baton Twirling Championships.

Baton twirling is well established as an international event, and there were teams from seven countries taking part.

The home of the sport (or is it an art?) is the United States, but Meyrin is important enough to have hosted the European championships in 1981.

The girls, with their chaperone and supporters, were hosted by an English majorette team, the Maids of Kent. Bill Sims, public relations officer for the Maids, told *Swiss Observer* just what an impression the girls had created.

"They were so charming", he said, "and even when it was only a rehearsal they carried the Swiss national flag with such pride. Their bearing, their neatness and physical fitness were



Time for a meal and relaxation after the marching

from Switzerland impression

a credit to the Swiss nation”.

Before the girls appeared in the competition, there was a chance to do a little sightseeing – and some bargain hunting.

Their hosts had arranged visits to the Tower of London and Westminster Abbey but these bright eyed Swiss misses also found time to pick up bargains which astounded their English friends.

“They seemed to have a mixture of charm and self-reliance”, said Bill Sims. “Those girls must have done more for Anglo-Swiss relationships than a dozen diplomats”.

Unfortunately, although the Meyribelles won many friends, they did not win as many competition points as they had hoped for.

“They performed with tremendous grace, skill and physical effort”, reported Bill Sims, “but although they got a good reception from the audience the scores weren’t quite high enough”.

The girls remained cheerful though. As the coach carried the two teams back to Kent, the Meyribelles were still singing.



The Meyribelles at Crystal Palace



Another Swiss team, the Majorettes of Bienne, took part in the group section of the competition