

# 23rd Gordon-Bennett Balloon Race

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**23rd GORDON-BENNETT BALLOON RACE.  
Warsaw, September 15th, 1935.**

Those of our readers who minutely scanned the English Daily Press for news about the International Gordon-Bennett Race, which took place last Sunday at Warsaw, must have met with great disappointment. The large London Daily papers have almost *in toto* ignored this great International Sporting event, which on the Continent and in America is followed with the greatest interest. True enough, England has not, — and if we are rightly informed, — has never competed, but we would have thought, that a sporting event of such magnitude would have been of sufficient interest to the British Public, to devote at least half a column to it, considering that often news of trifling importance from abroad receive an unwarranted publicity. England has always been known, and rightly so, as a Nation of Sportsmen, and it is the least said, regrettable, that the otherwise well-informed English Press has not found it necessary to send their reporters to a Meeting which ranks as one of the most important ones in the sporting world; we loath to think that the reason for such an omission is due to the fact, that no British entrants could be found to participate in this race, it would be contrary to the sporting instinct and spirit of this great Empire. Curiously enough some of the smaller provincial papers have deemed it important enough to devote a small column to it, whilst London papers, as mentioned above, have either ignored it entirely or given it a few lines only.—

The following details might interest our readers:

Twenty-seven years ago, the startling victory of Colonel Schäck, President of the Swiss Aero Club, as he then was, caused a great stir throughout Switzerland. The start was made from Berlin, where altogether 23 balloons took off. The distance flown by the gallant colonel and his companion amounted to 1200km. and they were all in all 73 hours in the air. The Americans came in second, covering a distance of 428 km. This event was unfortunately marred by some regrettable incidents; a few minutes after starting, an American balloon, burst at the height of 500m.; fortunately the cover acted as a parachute, and both pilot and passenger had a narrow escape, landing without being even hurt. The day following the net of one of the Spanish competitors snapped during the voyage but luckily enough no loss of life occurred. The Swiss balloon "Cognac" piloted by Victor de Beauclair landed near the north sea coast, others risked the trip over the open sea, with the result that four balloons were fished out of the water, somewhere near Heligoland, when two German pilots lost their lives, through having been drowned.

Luck favoured the Swiss, after many hours of anxious waiting, the welcome news came over the wire, that the balloon "Helvetia" which was piloted by Colonel Schäck, had landed safely on the Norwegian coast after having been altogether 73 hours in the air. Switzerland thus not only won the race, but had also beaten the world record of a duration flight. For the first time therefore our country was entrusted with the arrangements for the next competition, which was held at Zurich, at the beginning of October 1909. Switzerland was then represented with three balloons: "Azura" (Captain E. Messmer, the companion of colonel Schäck in 1908); "Helvetia" (Colonel Schäck) and "Cognac" (Victor de Beauclair) and took 3rd, 4th and 7th place. The winner of this race was the American Mix, with balloon "America II," and second the Frenchman Alf. Leblanc with balloon "He de France." A strong west-wind blew the balloons over Austria, Teheco-Slovakia and as far as the Russian Frontier.

Eleven years later (1921), victory again came to Switzerland. M. P. Armbruster from Berne, started from Brussels, where 14 balloons were entered, having been blown towards the open sea, he risked the journey over the water, and landed safely on the island of Lambey, near the Irish coast, 766km. away from the starting point, and

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once again the beautiful Gordon-Bennett cup, which is valued at 10,000 Swiss francs, was entrusted into the safe-custody of Switzerland.

In 1922 the race was held at Geneva, where 19 balloons competed, amongst them three under the Swiss flag. The winner of this race, was the Belgian Demuyter, who also won the next two races and consequently the cup became the perpetual property of the Aero-Club of Belgium. Gordon-Bennett, the proprietor of the New York Herald, then offered a new cup, an exact replica of the first one, this new cup was won again by a Belgian. Then W. T. Orman, an American appeared on the field, and in 1928, after three consecutive wins, the trophy was won outright by the Americans.

After Henry Ford had provided a new cup, the Gordon Bennett race continued in 1929 at St. Louis (U.S.A.) and 1931 (1930 no race took place) in Cleveland (U.S.A.); in 1933 America won the cup outright. The American Aero Club offered a new cup, which was won in 1933 and 1934 by Poland. —

At the time of writing, no definitive results are available, the Swiss Balloon "Zurich III" is reported to have landed at Neuenmühle near Riga after a flight of 28 hours, the German Balloon "Deutschland" has also landed near Riga. So far it is doubtful that Switzerland will be in the front rank.

(We intend to publish in one of our next issues a complete list, giving the landing place and exact distance flown by each competitor.)

**LATEST NEWS.**

Subject to official verification, the first three placings in the Gordon-Bennett balloon race, which started from Warsaw on Sunday, are:

1. "Warszawa" (Polish), with Capt. Anthony Janusz, which covered 970 miles;
2. "Belgica" (Belgium), with M. Ernest Demuyter, which covered 870 miles;
3. "Kosciusko" (Polish), with Capt. Frank Hynek, the winner in 1933 and 1934, which covered 806 miles.

They all landed in Russia, south of Moscow. If these placings are confirmed Poland, by winning three times in succession, will be entitled to permanent possession of the present trophy.

**HOME FOR AGED SWISS.**

Owing to some unexpected developments, it will be possible to proceed with the organisation of the Home at a much earlier date than was anticipated.

Unless the work of making indispensable repairs should prove very lengthy, it is now hoped to have some of our aged and needy compatriots housed in the Home before the end of the year.

The Committee is most anxious to enlist the support of the Swiss Colony in making the Home all what its name implies and begs to remind its members who may have surplus furniture or household goods that such will be gratefully received by the

Swiss Benevolent Society,  
34, Fitzroy Square, W.1.

If desired, the Committee will gladly make arrangements for having goods collected at the house of the donor.

**FROM THE LIVERPOOL COLONY.  
The late Mrs. Rosa HOCH †.**

I must recall the years around 1910. We had then a member of the Swiss Club Liverpool, Mr. A. Hoch, senior to most active members of those years, but who nevertheless enjoyed our company so well, that he sometimes after a Banquet, would invite the whole company to another Banquet next day at his own expense.

One day Mr. Hoch, much to our surprise married and we wondered what his lady from Didsbury would be like. We found her a charming woman, quiet and dignified, and whom we soon could like.

After a few years of married life, a motor tragedy left her a widow and we at once decided to make her an honorary member of the Club, an action which was a consolation to her at the time and an honour which she appreciated.

She filled her time by acting as a poor law guardian and then became a City Councillor, work which proved of absorbing interest to her. She remained attached to our Club, gave constant support to the Swiss Relief Committee and thus we feel a personal loss now that she has also passed away. There must be many former members of our Club scattered over the world, who will retain of her, a kindly memory and who will feel it right, that we should have paid her the respect of an affectionate farewell.

On behalf of the Consulate, the Swiss Relief Committee and, of course, the Swiss Club, a deputation was sent to her funeral who deposited a wreath on behalf of us all.

If spending your life in service for others means happiness, hers was indeed a happy life.  
E. M.

**SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY LTD.**

After a short respite during the summer months the Society resumed its Monthly Meetings on Wednesday, September 11th. A goodly number of members were present when Mr. A. Steinmann, President, opened the proceedings. The main item on the Agenda was the Lecture Programme and Social Fixtures for the coming season. The Committee had spared no efforts in making the programme as varied and attractive as possible. The hope was expressed that the members would give it their wholehearted support and further particulars in the form of a leaflet will be sent out in due course. The Chairman informed the Meeting that the Evening Classes will re-open on September 30th and exhorted the members to make full use of the facilities offered them. The Chairman also referred to a circular letter received by the Swiss Legation giving particulars of an extensive broadcasting programme "For Swiss Abroad" transmitted by the Swiss Broadcasting Society. Mr. W. Meier, Chairman of the Education Committee, reported on the recent activities of the College, mentioning in particular the very successful excursions to Portsmouth during Navy Week, the Ford Motor Works at Dagenham and the Port of London. Mr. J. J. Boos, Chairman of the House Committee, reported on the activities of his Committee and recent re-decorations effected at Swiss House.

The Meeting was followed by a lecture on "Industrial Co-partnership," by E. W. Mundy, Esq., B.A. (Oxon), late Secretary of the Industrial Co-partnership Association. The students of the College were invited to this lecture.

The lecturer who is an authority on the subject gave a number of illustrative plans of co-partnership in industry. His arguments were ensued by an interesting debate. A hearty vote of thanks was accorded to the speaker for his very interesting lecture.

**OBITUARY.** From Hausen a/Albis comes the sad news of the decease on August 26th of Dr. Phil. h.c. Alfred Reinhardt of Alexandria (Egypt). In him the Society loses one of its staunchest supporters. He was a donor to the Educational Fund ever since the foundation of the College in 1922.

WB.

**SUR UN EXCES DE LA DEMOCRATIE.**

La Constitution vient donc d'échapper à l'issue fatale et soudaine et elle n'est plus menacée que d'une longue agonie.

Ainsi en a décrété le peuple, qui, s'il n'a pas voulu qu'on brisât d'un coup ses tables de la loi, n'en entend pas moins qu'on poursuive sans relâche et article après article la réforme constitutionnelle.

Cependant, peuple, c'est trop vite dit, et, au vrai, les citoyens ne s'entendent guère sur la longue suite de révisions partielles qui appellent notre verdict; les uns réclament des changements qu'à aucun prix ne veulent les autres, proposant ailleurs, et tout un chacun bientôt avance sa petite opinion inconciliable avec celle du voisin.

Les révisions fragmentaires trouvent ainsi d'acharnés adversaires, aussi bien qu'elles font lever des partisans résolus, et, comme il faut relativement peu de signatures pour faire aboutir une initiative, les partisans sont assurés de contraindre les adversaires à l'épreuve du scrutin.

La démocratie s'en trouve satisfaite davantage que la raison et l'on n'arrête plus guère de voter chez nous.

Neuf initiatives, sauf erreur, attendent encore que le peuple se prononce et le sort de plusieurs d'entre elles est réglée d'avance. Ce n'est pas pourtant qu'il soit inutile de voter lorsque le succès est acquis, car la confirmation populaire ajoute évidemment à la force d'une décision.

Mais, dans le cas de la défaite promise, on peut par contre se demander si c'est la peine vraiment de sonner le rassemblement des électeurs, de faire, en pléines années maigres, les gros frais d'une consultation, de déclencher les passions et de permettre en conséquences aux citoyens d' "un libre peuple de frères" de s'aimer toujours un peu moins les uns les autres.

Poser la question, comme dit l'autre, c'est la résoudre, en théorie du moins, et, en fait, on n'entreprend rien contre l'un des plus flagrants abus de la démocratie; car c'est un abus sans conteste que 50,000 citoyens puissent à eux seuls mobiliser tout le corps électoral, et ce chiffre, s'il correspondait à celui de la population suisse au milieu du siècle dernier, n'est plus du tout en rapport avec la population actuelle.

Pour retrouver ce rapport et pour rendre à l'initiative et au referendum leur premier sens et quelque vertu, il faudrait exiger beaucoup plus de 50,000 signatures.

On s'étonne même de l'imprévoyance de nos pères sur ce point et que les vénéral artisans de la Constitution si fortement critique aujourd'hui