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SWISS CLUB MANCHESTER

Members and friends of the Swiss Club, Manchester, gathered together again for the traditional Easter Ramble into the surrounding countryside, and this year's choice was the Ribble and Hodder valleys with some of the most unrivalled scenery that Lancashire can offer, and, weather permitting, the finest places for ramblers and holiday-makers, the rivers being a fisherman's paradise. These valleys are closely linked with many historical events, and the many abbeys, fine family homes (some dating back to pre-Norman times), Roman remains, and Saxon reminiscences, bear full witness to a rich and varied past.

We counted amongst us our dear Consul and Madame Rosset, and other stalwart and loyal members and friends of the older generation encircled by a good number of younger ones and many visitors from Switzerland, all happy and eager to admire this part of the country and to enjoy a picnic and walk along the banks of the Hodder river between the Higher and Lower Bridges. Due to the most appalling weather conditions this part of our programme had to be severely curtailed, and, the rain never leaving us, we had to make the best of a bad day.

The coach, leaving behind the busy industrial belt, brought us eventually to our first halt, Whalley. There, Mr. Browning, the warden of the abbey, took charge of the party, showing us the very old Norman Perpendicular Parish Church dating back to the early twelfth century, its architecture being a joy with its fine carvings, the miserere seats, the cage pews, the very fine organ and many other interesting contents, not forgetting the remains of Saxon life and death, to be seen in the graveyard.

Nearby are the still imposing remains of Whalley Abbey, home of the Cistercian monks. One of the finest monastic relics of the North, it was founded in 1178 in Cheshire and moved to Whalley in 1296. The last Abbot, who became somehow involved in what was known as the "Pilgrimage of Grace", a rebellion against the king, was eventually executed in Lancaster. After his forced departure, this once great centre of culture, work, and administration fell into utter disuse, and today only two gateways, almost intact, and the Conference House, bear witness to a great past. The Conference House, a later addition, with its modern chapel and a fine show of original Limoges enamel triptics, is still in use, and the curator very kindly explained the various sites to us. In 1926 the Bishop of Blackburn endowed and re-dedicated these beautiful ruins.

After our picnic lunch in our rolling headquarters, "our coach", we moved on to Hurst Green for a visit to its famous Stonyhurst College and beautiful Church. This College was originally founded abroad in 1592 and came to Stonyhurst in 1694, and it is today one of the most notable Jesuit Houses in the world, students entering at a very early age to be prepared eventually for University studies. Our good friend Mr. Hanna arranged an interior tour of inspection for us, a great privilege indeed. A very young and friendly priest showed us round, and the many fine collections, may I just mention in particular the priceless handwritten and illuminated pergamens-books of the very early middle-ages, and many other very beautiful and rare museum exhibits, could have kept us there for hours,

Soon we were on our way again, and eventually arrived at our final station, the lovely, little, old-time village of Waddington, which boasts a Hall from Saxon times, modernised and still inhabited, and also twenty-seven almshouses over 260 years old, and an old and interesting Church, with its embattled tower of Henry VIII's reign, and a rich and well-decorated interior. At the Sun Inn we sat down to our high tea, which was well served and everybody seemed to have enjoyed it.

We were perhaps not aware that on our homeward journey we passed the foot of Pendle Hill, which rises to a height of 1,831 feet, in bygone days the haunt of the Lancashire Witches. Although hidden by a dense curtain of mist, as it very often is, we were shadowed by this hill the whole day, and he amongst us who may one day return to these places, under happier conditions, and look at this hill and its very beautiful surroundings, will feel the full enchantment and attraction of them, and only the interests and necessities of life will take him away again.

E.B.

COMMUNIQUE FROM THE SWISS EMBASSY

Inquiry concerning Swiss property affected by Egyptian nationalization laws

In connection with the protection of Swiss property following the Egyptian nationalization laws of July 1961, the Federal authorities wish to have information about the scale on which Swiss interests in the United Arab Republic have been affected. Swiss nationals who have interests in the U.A.R. which come under the nationalization laws of July 1961 are requested to inform the Swiss Embassy, who will subsequently supply application forms on which they can notify the Political Department of the extent of their funds in Egypt.

Nouvelle Société Helvétique

(LONDON GROUP)

Tuesday, 15th May 1962, at 7.45 p.m.

at the Swiss Hostel for Girls

9 Belsize Grove, N.W.3

OPEN MEETING

The famous Swiss traveller and explorer

Mrs. KLARA WEHRLI

will talk in English on her visit to exotic **Easter Island** as guest of the Government of Chile.

The talk is illustrated by numerous projections.

Refreshment service with coffee or tea (4/6 inclusive) from 6.45 p.m. onwards.

Will members and friends intending to be present please inform the Warden of the Swiss Hostel not later than Tuesday, 15th May, between 11 a.m. and noon. Tel.

PRImrose 6856)