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THE "GOLDEN ROSE" BLOOMS ONCE AGAIN IN MONTREUX

As time draws near for the annual battle to begin for the world's most coveted television trophy, the name of Montreux crops up again and again in British newspapers.

It is doubtful whether any individual resort has ever received as much publicity as has Montreux in the last few weeks, with TV columnists not only setting the scene but, in several cases, attempting to prejudge the results of this year's bigger-than-ever contest for the "Golden Rose of Montreux".

The battle proper does not begin until 17th April, but already protagonists on both sides have been rooting for the two official British entries — ABC Television's "Thank Your Lucky Stars" (which is going to Montreux to represent the whole of ITV) and the BBC's "The Good Old Days".

Said one critic: "The BBC and ITV shows add up to the best of both worlds — modern and old time. Only the judges can now decide."

But what respectable journalist can wait for the judges when he has millions of impatient readers waiting to know what *he* thinks?

Ken Irwin in the "Daily Mirror" had no hesitation about which programme he would back. He wrote:

"Britain has more than an outside chance of winning the world's top TV light entertainment prize to be decided at the Montreux International TV Festival in Switzerland.

"That's my verdict after seeing a special recording of 'The Good Old Days'. I feel the BBC entry has more than a fair chance of success. It is the kind of unique show which may well appeal to the international team of judges. It has that old-fashioned warmth about it, a genuine display of entertainment talent, and just a sprinkling of 'corn' to help it out. But its big appeal is that this particular edition has an international flavour. Producer Barney Colehan has been shrewd in booking his acts."

But someone else who was present at that special recording didn't feel anything like so confident.

Philip Diack wrote in the "Daily Herald": "After watching it, I don't fancy our chances."

A BBC spokesman waded into the argument with this pat on the back: "We regard it as a first-class programme and it is also a tribute to the Northern region, from which so much of our best light entertainment comes."

Producer Barney Colehan, however, was rather more restrained. "Whether the show is good or bad", he was quoted as saying, "there will be nothing else like it".

Despite the arguments over "The Good Old Days", ITV's choice of "Thank Your Lucky Stars" was generally well received. The edition going to Montreux is, in fact, one that created records when it was first shown in Britain last December. It was seen then by an estimated 20,000,000 viewers — the largest audience ever for "Thank Your Lucky Stars" — presumably because of its Merseyside theme and the fact that it starred a whole host of Liverpool groups including that current show-business phenomenon, the Beatles.

Since the two official entries were announced, TV producers have been tumbling over each other in the rush to send their programmes to Montreux. According to the rules, there is no limit to the number of programmes to be submitted *hors concours*. And while such programmes cannot win the gold-plated Rose (or the cash award of Frs.10,000.—), they can pick up even more valuable "prizes".

For the "Golden Rose" contest attracts to Montreux some of the world's leading TV executives — all with money to spend and looking out for the pick of the programmes to buy for their home audiences. And all the *hors concours* programmes get the same treatment as the "Golden Rose" entries by being televised over the closed-circuit system to receivers throughout the Festival Hall.

As if not content with having scooped the other thirteen ITV companies by having its own programme picked to represent the network, ABC Television decided to send four more programmes *hors concours*, none of them, however, featuring British artists.

Associated-Rediffusion announced that it was sending its own Merseyside programme to Montreux — a Dan Farson semi-documentary called "Beat City", the principal stars of which are Gerry and the Pacemakers. Incidentally, this means that this popular group will be making history by scoring the first "Montreux double", for it is also featured in the "Thank Your Lucky Stars" programme.

Next, Granada revealed that it, too, would be represented at Montreux for the first time, with a Manchester-originated spectacular called "Here's Little Richard".

All in all, it seems as if there will be quite a British invasion of Montreux this time — not only of programmes but of people, too.

Station executives, light entertainment producers and directors, designers, writers — they will all be going along to observe how their opposite numbers from other countries react to their efforts, and also to find out for themselves what new techniques are being developed in other parts of the world.

In addition, many stars have already announced their intention of going to Montreux to join in the fun. Gerry and the Pacemakers will be there (they are due to fly out from London the day they return home from their long Australian tour), singers Eira Heath and Kathy Kirby, comedians Mike and Bernie Winters and Dickie Henderson, disc jockey and compère Keith Fordyce.

But the celebrity with the most original idea of all is comic Jimmy Edwards. A wartime pilot whose newest hobby is flying, he is planning to fly his wife and himself from Shoreham, near their Sussex home, to Montreux direct.

Sixteen-and-a-half-stone Jimmy has asked the Montreux authorities if they mind him "dropping in" on the local airport in his single-engined plane which he bought last summer.

And back has come an answer from 34-year-old Ernst Saxer, who is in charge of the 750-yard-long grassy airstrip lying between the mountains and the lake of Geneva, saying: "Delighted, but please give us a day's notice so we can get someone along from the Swiss customs to clear your baggage!"

The comedian's very serious request has, in fact, caused something of a flap at the "airport". Visitors from abroad are a rarity.

The airstrip is mainly used by Saxer, who is a member of the famous Swiss Alpine Air Rescue Service, to take trippers on quick flips into the mountains. He flies them to a height of 9,000 feet in a plane fitted with giant skis, then makes a spectacular uphill landing on a tiny, steeply-sloping snowfield just below the summit of the towering Dents du Midi.

Jimmy Edwards' plane can fly for four-and-a-half hours before refuelling, but in planning his trip he has decided to divide it into two-hour "hops".

His co-star in "The Good Old Days", Eira Heath, is not travelling with him. She is making the journey by airliner.

"Don't blame her really", said Jimmy when he was told. "Anyone who does it the hard way when there's a perfectly good Swissair service between London and Geneva must be a nut-case!"

(*Helvetic News Service.*)

PAST AND PRESENT OF THE SWISS SKI-SCHOOL ASSOCIATION'S SKI COURSES

By HEINZ GISLER

The Sports Editor of Switzerland's "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" tells the story of what has been described as "the world's biggest ski course" and how this annual early-winter event and ski-ing in general became important occasions for the promotion of "understanding between the nations".

May we remind you: There are two ski courses. In earlier years both courses were taught by the same instructors. Last year for the first time the two courses were completely separate although they took place concurrently. Both courses were organised by the Swiss Ski-School Association and over-all administration of both is handled by the business manager and technical director, Christian Rubi of Wengen. The ski-school directors course celebrated its thirtieth anniversary at St. Moritz in December 1963. In 1933, under pressure of foreign competition, representatives of the Swiss Railways, the Postal Telephone and Telegraph Association, the Hotel Keepers Association, and the Swiss National Tourist Office, organised a course for ski-school directors for the first time. The following winter a group of twenty "students" also participated in the course. In that same year the Swiss Ski-School Association was formed. Today its membership includes 120 ski-schools.

The number of "Students" grew from year to year, climbing quickly into the hundreds and then into the thousands. More than 3,500 applications for the 1963 ski course at St. Moritz were received from skiers from many different countries. This large participation materialized even though the course was not advertised publicly. It has become well known primarily through word-of-mouth advertising.

Last year the ski-school directors course had a special five-and-a-half day programme and the guests received six days of ski instruction from between 100 and 170 additional professional paid instructors. The ski-school directors course is important for the development of Swiss techniques of ski instruction; the course for ski-guests is more spectacular and more important in terms of promoting Switzerland as a wintersports centre.

Ski-School Directors as Students

Attendance at the annual course of instruction is obligatory for directors of Swiss Ski-schools. This is not primarily for the purpose of improving the ski technique of the ski-school leaders, many of whom have been successful racers for a number of years and have spent many

years as ski-instructors. The major purpose of this course is to achieve a unified ski technique and method of instruction. The Swiss Ski-School wishes to maintain a good reputation on a world-wide basis. Winter guests from abroad who visit briefly Verbier, Mürren and Davos should not be offered different styles of ski techniques and different methods of instruction in each place. Difficulties of this type must be investigated, differences adjusted and ambiguities eliminated. The course for ski-school directors which takes place every year before the start of the season offers the best opportunity to settle any possible differences.

The number of people who want to learn to ski or to ski better is growing like an avalanche. This is due largely to improved transportation facilities, newly developed ski areas, and the advertising slogan that a "Winter Holiday is a Double Holiday". For that reason it is especially important to know that in all ski-schools of the country a single, unified method of technique and instruction is offered.

In 1963 the group of 120 ski-school directors attending the ski-school course included four women. In addition to this group there were twelve candidates who were taking a fourteen day training programme to prepare themselves for the ski-directors examination. This group was instructed by a team of especially qualified teachers who are also ski-school directors. The instruction was given in twelve classes. In colourful sequence the group leaders took turns being students and the students took a turn as teachers. In this way every participant had an opportunity to give instruction in a particular turn — from the most elementary preliminary training to the final expert swing. Particular importance is attached to selecting the proper terrain for location of the classes.

Every ski-instructor is expected to be able to give instruction in at least two languages. This point is of great importance for the success of the Swiss ski-school. When the ski-school directors course comes to an end, the participants return to their own resorts where they conduct courses for the ski-instructors in their own schools. In this way all ski-instructors in Switzerland benefit from the programme and recommendations of the centralized course. Every ski-school is anxious to be properly prepared in all respects for the large number of clients who arrive when the high season begins just before Christmas.

Easily, Safely, and without Falling

The small and unobtrusive posters of the Swiss Ski-School issued by the Swiss National Tourist Office begin with a promise: The Swiss Ski-School leads the way to expert ski-ing. Immediately it states also a concrete purpose: one technique; one method; one goal: to ski over every terrain easily, safely and without falling.

The teaching programme develops in orderly fashion, using a method derived from the principles enumerated in this motto. The students learn balance as they practise walking, gliding and side slipping. Next they gain sureness and self-confidence through mastery of stem turns and stem christies. These basic techniques are particularly useful in difficult snow, when visibility is limited, or when one must ski with a knapsack. The parallel christie and wedel give the fast skier the feeling of weightless turning and flying both on the trail and in deep powder snow. No Swiss Ski-School avoids these advanced swings. They are an integral part of the programme. Even the very earliest, most basic instruction gives attention to the movements which provide the foundation for the more difficult wedel movement.