

Coming to Bernried feels like coming home.



CIAT Bernried 2018

When Wilhelmina Busch, heiress to the Anhäuser-Busch Breweries in St. Louis, Miss., arrived at Bernried on her tour of Old Europe, she decided at once that this was the place she wished to remain for the rest of her life.

A decision that would no doubt be taken by all who arrive here provided they could afford to buy up large areas of land around the western shores of Lake Starnberg as she was able to. It is fortunate that the people who live here now are welcoming, able organizers and horse mad. They organized the first CIAT event ever held in Germany, and have continued to do so ever since, making the weekend of June, 23rd and 24th, 2018 the 15th show.



On entering the Hofgut Bernried, exhausted by a long road trip with trailer, one might have expected at least half an hour of inquiries to find out about stabling, water supplies, electric sockets, straw and hay - and, last but not least - where to find accomodation. Nothing of the kind was necessary: A young gentleman (7 ½ feet), was on hand with a friendly smile to guide you to your place. He then proceeded to help unloading and take the horses to their stables. Everything was ready for the horses and the stables were within easy reach of the car and lorry park; a very practical arrangement for grooming and putting-to later. If there was any problem, the gentleman - who understood the problems involved with being far from home with horses - was at hand with advice and practical support.



When everybody had had time to shower and swap their travelling clothes for casual dress, they gathered at the “*salett*” in the “*Drei Rosen*” country inn in Bernried for the welcome party. Bernried’s mayor, Sepp Steigenberger (who is also, incidentally, Vice President of AIAT Germany) had his humorous welcome speech ready, which resulted in creating a very relaxed and cheerful atmosphere that made everybody at once feel at home amongst old friends. Spirits were high, thus making it difficult for Günter Ortner, the organizer-in-chief, to call everybody to order to inform them about the technicalities of the drive set for the following day. Many drivers were so exhilarated with the authentic Bavarian beergarden atmosphere that they could still be seen sitting around in groups late into the night.



The following morning, at 9 o'clock sharp, the first turnout appeared in the picturesque courtyard belonging to the convent in Bernried. The judges took up their positions in the shadow of the 400 year old oak trees where the whips were to present their turnouts. The judges were Baron Christian de Langlade - president of the jury and president of AIAT (F) - Raimondo Coral-Rubiales (E) and Reinhold Trapp (F). The competition had drawn 28 whips who drove a variety of interesting turnouts.



There were country turnouts, heavy cobs put to a German hunting vehicle, a lively light Warmblood put to a dainty Stanhope Gig, a KWPN put to a stylish Italian 4-Wheel-Dogcart, a heavy Warmblood put to a very elegant Swiss Spider Phaeton and driven by a very courageous elderly lady, a pair of small Andalusians put to a sporting French 4-Wheel Dogcart, and last but not least, a pair of grey Warmbloods put to a Cabriolet wearing Curricule harness. Even the two replica phaetons received some sympathy from the judges.



After each turnout had been judged, the speakers Anette Metzger and Sepp Steigenberger introduced each one to the numerous members of the audience who had gathered in the courtyard. The former explained the technical details of the turnouts and the latter had anecdotes and humorous reminiscences of the days of horse-drawn traffic in Bavaria and, in particular, during the days of Wilhelmina Busch in Bernried. And all this whilst the turnouts were waiting for the signal, that was given at 6 minutes intervals, to say that they may start the next discipline.



The *routier* was about 14 km long. This, however, is not a satisfactory description of the beauty of the route. The first section lead through the picturesque landscaped park along the shores of Lake Starnberg offering up views of yachts on the lake, of groves of 400 years old oaks. It then passed by Wilhelmina's afternoon tea pavilion, and eventually lead to the village crossroad, safeguarded by a group of stern looking men from the local fire brigade.



The drive passed by the pastures and fields west of Bernried (by the way: they are about 640 m above sea level, the lake about 600 m!), past a pond with the lane getting more and more crooked and narrow. The PCs didn't seem artificial but more like natural obstacles on this type of road. Who wouldn't expect a place where you needed to back your turnout in a narrow passage in this lane?



The third section of the *routier* lead down to the lake once more where Höhenried Castle's well kept parkland welcomed the turnouts with pleasant shadows beneath the large trees and offering a magnificent view over the lake every now and again. The road winding downhill lead to the castle between well cut hedges, passing fine monuments, along swimming areas with bathing people who clapped their hands on seeing the horses, and finally ending up in front of the castle's main gate, where the drivers were welcomed by a committee of young ladies offering a glass of champagne and snacks to the whips and their passengers.



The cone driving took place in the afternoon in a show ring situated in a meadow. It was designed to offer an agreeable course, pleasant to drive without narrow bends and tricks, but situated on a slight slope - which most drivers underestimated! The course was then quickly taken away after the last competitor had finished to become the arena for the final prize giving.



The scene was set when the 28 turnouts had lined up for this ceremony, each winner moving a few meters forward to be awarded a cup. Many a driver had tears in their eyes when their national anthems were played. After each turnout had taken their place again in the line up they drove three laps of honour while the cheerful tune “Good bye, my little officer of the Guard...” entertained the public who clapped to the rhythm of the music.



When the drivers and their helpers, and the organizers of the event and their helpers all met up that evening in formal dress at the Buchheim Collection's restaurant everyone was in a good mood. Everyone had made new friends and all of them confessed they had never before taken part in such a pleasant and fun traditional driving event with such a friendly atmosphere and they all promised to come again next year.

