

A sham Olympic female champion

We relate, herewith, the authentic facts of an amusing incident which took place last January when the hoax was brought to light. It is connected with the swimming club of Bienne (town in Switzerland), called the 'Swim Boys' who were very proud of the fact that, for a period of six months, they had been trained by Judy Grindham (Great Britain) Olympic champion of the 100 m. back-stroke in (1'12"9, thus beating the Olympic record at the Olympic Games of Melbourne in 1956). The so-called Judy Grindham took part in the traditional Bienne New-Year's cup contest when she was placed second of three competitors. Nothing daunted, she gave an interview complete with photo (how rash!) to the reporter of the local newspaper *Seeländer Volkszeitung* giving him, of course, erroneous reports on her past achievements! This caused the means of discovering the wrong identity of the so-called pseudo champion: Judy Grindham, the Swim-Boys' trainer (highly qualified nevertheless, one said) who happened to be a young German girl from Cologne, twenty years old called Barbara Pietsch, a house helper in a family at Bienne! She was of course an excellent swimmer, but certainly not for the class of the genuine British champion. It took six months to the over-credulous inhabitants of the city of Bienne to discover the impostor.

As all stories have a 'happy end' this one ended in... water, as it were. In point of fact, a Zurich newspaper conceived the idea of causing the real champion Judy Grindham and the usurper of her title, the German girl Barbara Pietsch to meet and they were brought face to face at a meeting which took place last January 27th and 28th. The British champion, who recently married a British journalist Pat Rowley, agreed to stop one day in Zurich on her way to winter sports in St. Moritz. A swimming competition was organized and took place in the Zurich indoor swimming pool. In spite of the difference of age, the two competitors are respectively 20 and 26 added to the fact that Mrs. Rowley is the proud mother of a seven months old baby, the superiority of the latter was quite obvious.

Barbara made her apologies to Judy who forgave her readily with a kiss and some judicious parting advices. She wrote a few words on a slip of paper and put in Barbara's hand, saying: 'Barbara, my dear, I wish you to know that I bear you no grudge and I also wish you the best of luck in your future career as a swimmer.' Barbara replied: 'I never dreamt that, one day, I should ever compete against the person I idolize, the famous Judy Grindham.'... and she returned to her kitchen!