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Switzerland in the UK

Changes at the Embassy

Consul General Edi Jaun's five-year tour of duty at the Swiss Embassy in London is over and he and his wife Frieda have now moved to take up a similar posting in Chicago.

Before he left he wrote to *Swiss Review*: "During our stay in England we have had the opportunity and pleasure of meeting many of our compatriots and will take many happy and good memories with us.

"To all of you we wish a prosperous and healthy future."

Consul Mrs Lässer has also left to take up a new post in Tokyo and has been replaced by Mrs Barbara Young-Hetzel.

Do Swiss schools have a vital lesson to help UK teachers?

Experiments carried out in a number of schools in London have shown that Switzerland may have the answer to falling educational standards in the UK – a subject that is causing growing concerns to parents and politicians.

After studying teaching methods used in German-speaking cantons, educationists from Britain were so impressed they decided to conduct a pilot scheme in six schools in the London borough of Barking & Dagenham.

Fifteen maths classes were involved. Teachers were encouraged to substantially

change their style of teaching to embrace many of the elements associated with *Frontalunterricht* – whole class teaching.

This involves a high degree of participation from pupils in terms of answering and posing questions, discussion and demonstration to the rest of the class.

The results were spectacular. In tests covering mental calculation and multiplication, gains as high as 70 per cent were recorded.

Results of tests involving addition, subtraction and division are still being analysed, but it is known that one class achieved a gain of 45 per cent.

Graham Last, the borough's senior inspector of schools who is in charge of the project, said: "Teachers have reported that pupils have gained considerably in confidence to talk to the whole class.

"Their ability to explain and articulate their thoughts

using appropriate vocabulary has also improved notably, and they enjoyed making a contribution to the lesson.

"Even pupils with learning difficulties were able to take part, which rarely happened in the past."

As a background to the tests the official report says that for several years there has been concern about poor results among primary school pupils, particularly in maths.

"There is evidence that, even by the age of nine, our average and below-average pupils are doing notably less well than their continental counterparts," it says.

A charitable trust paid for school inspectors, heads and teachers to go to Switzerland to observe *Frontalunterricht* teaching in practice.

And more are on their way – to discover how Swiss scholastic successes can be transplanted into schools in the UK.

Landesgemeinde's surprise visitor



There was a link with the first Yorkshire Landesgemeinde held in 1948 when Mrs Andrée Hastings, daughter of the visionary who first came up with the idea, the late Professor Jean Inebnit, attended this year's event. See story on centre pages.

Declining membership fear

MOST Swiss societies are facing a declining membership, Rose-Marie Breitenstein told the FOSSUK AGM, when she reported on a questionnaire that had gone to 24 societies. Ten had responded, and a working party would meet in August to analyse their replies.

"There is a lot of good work we can do, with the cooperation of your all, to reverse the losses in membership," she said

"Swiss societies serve a very useful function in encouraging people to get

together and help preserve our national heritage."

René Lenzin, editor of the *Swiss Review*, said he would like to be able to help societies with ideas to enable them recruit more members, and in particular younger members

One way would be to pass on ideas that were known to work with other societies.

He hoped that within 18 months they would be able to send a manual containing helpful suggestions to all 700 Swiss clubs around the world.



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World's largest fondue may feature in Switzerland Live

LET'S create the largest fondue in the world – that's one of the ambitious ideas for this year's Switzerland Live.

This celebration of all that is best about Switzerland was such a success last year that it is being repeated, but with many new events.

The giant fondue is being proposed as the centrepiece of the Daily Mail Ski Show, with members of the Swiss ski team as guests.

Almost certain to be held is a snowboarding competition in Leicester Square, which was such a success last year. Alongside it could well be a Swiss village, supported by many Swiss exporters.

Another of last year's highspots that could be repeated is a Swiss Week on Classic FM, possibly linked with the Lucerne Music Festival.

A Swiss week in Shepherd Neam pubs throughout Surrey, Kent and Sussex is another project at present under discussion, as well as

a week-long promotion of Swiss food and other goods at Selfridges in London's Oxford Street.

The programme of events is being planned by a steering committee whose members include Graham Young (Wines of Switzerland), Maurice Johnson (Cheeses from Switzerland), Julian Payne (Suvretta House and Zermatterhof hotels), Jacques de Watteville and Gerhard Brügger (Swiss Embassy), Urs Gysin (Swiss Office for Trade Promotion), Ian Wright (Swiss Wine Information Services) and John Finan (Winterthur Life UK).

The chairman is Urs Eberhard, Swiss Tourism's UK director, who said: "We are always open to suggestions for other projects. We are particularly keen on an environmental day as Switzerland is in the forefront of environmental research."

Any ideas should be sent to Mr Eberhard at Swiss Centre, Swiss Court, London W1V 8EE.

Philatelists to celebrate society's golden years

THE Helvetia Philatelic Society will be celebrating its golden jubilee with a special event to be held at Royal Leamington Spa on Saturday, September 28.

The society, founded by Mr E Spiro in 1946, has 180 members, most of whom have Swiss family connections.

Dennis Cairns, the northern group secretary, said: "Our aims are to promote the philately of Switzerland. We like to assist collectors to get the most out of their hobby which in a world of stress is of a very therapeutic nature. Certainly it is much quieter than many

other hobbies!"

Meetings are held on a regular basis in London, Leeds and Brighton.

Said Mr Cairns: "Those who attend not only display their philatelic material but also reminisce about their latest holiday in Switzerland – and probably more is gained from the latter aspect than the former."

Meetings are open to anyone who would like to see what the society is all about, and you don't need to be a collector yourself.

Find out more from the general secretary, Mr J A Cordingley, of 57 Ware Road, Hoddesdon, EN11.



Major new moves to help the Swiss abroad

DELEGATES from the UK to the Council of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad have been playing a leading part in resisting proposed changes to the Swiss voluntary old age pension and invalidity insurance.

Although these changes will not affect existing pensions, they could have a detrimental effect on Swiss moving overseas in the future.

This is one of a number of subjects contained in the delegates' report to FOS-SUK on the last meeting of the council, held in Brunnen.

They report that the subject is still under discussion with the relevant federal department, but that despite a number of suggestions put forward by the OSA and supported by the federal department for foreign affairs, no satisfactory solution has yet been found.

Says the report: "It must be hoped that a reasonable compromise can be achieved which will not be too disadvantageous for the Swiss abroad, but the persistent stubbornness of the federal department for social assurance does not create a lot of optimism."

The report also discusses the new law on health insurance, which came into force on January 1. This lays down that Swiss must be accepted by Swiss health

insurance companies regardless of age or preconditions for the basic insurance.

Returning citizens must also take out insurance within three months of their arrival, and insurance cover will be effective from the date of registration in their home municipality.

The health insurance scheme offered by the Solidarity Fund and the Grütli Krankenkasse can no longer be continued under the new law. But other possibilities are being investigated

Members of the Solidarity Fund under the age of 79 are able to take out private insurance covering hospital and out-patient treatment worldwide with IHI (International Health Insurance).

(More details of this are available from the Solidarity Fund for the Swiss Abroad, Gutenbergstr. 26, CH-3011, Berne.)

The council noted that three Swiss Abroad candidates – among them Mrs Lisa Hall from the UK – failed in their bid to get elected to the Swiss parliament at the last elections, despite tremendous efforts.

Delegates were concerned about shortcomings that still existed for Swiss abroad to

exercise their right to vote.

They said that every effort must be made to eliminate the problems of late arrival of voting papers and to cancel the rule that the postal vote has to be re-applied for every four years.

They also wanted to see an increase in the flow of information to Swiss living overseas.

Delegates spent a lot of time discussing the proposed reform of the federal constitution.

They called for changes to the new Article 7, covering equality in law, which says that no one should be discriminated against based on origin, sex, race, language, social position, or religious or political convictions.

They suggested the additional qualification of "domicile" should be included to cover the Swiss abroad.

Insisting on the importance of the status of organisations like the OSA being preserved, they asked for changes to be made to a new Article 43.

The first paragraph of this article reads: "Der Bund fördert die Beziehungen der Auslandschweizerinnen und Auslandschweizer unter

such und zur Schweiz".

The OSA asked for this to be followed by: "Er anerkennt und unterstützt die im Dienste der Land-sleute im Ausland stehenden Institutionen."

While the German version of this amendment was accepted by delegates, agreement could not be reached on the French version, and this will now be the subject of further discussions.

The council was told that Article 127/128, concerning the composition of the national council and the council of state in relation to the Swiss living abroad, was still being examined by lawyers.

The chairman of a working party on the future of Swiss societies reported that a questionnaire had been prepared for sending out to all Swiss clubs worldwide. Rose-Marie Breitenstein, who is a member of the working party, is contacting clubs in the UK.

The next Assembly of the Swiss Abroad will be held in Neuchâtel on August 23 and 25, with the theme "Swiss research worldwide – the contribution of the Fifth Switzerland to international research."

Future events will be held in Lugano (1997), Aargau (1998), Vevey (1999), Zug (2000) and Biel (2001).

The Council was attended by the three UK delegates, Joe Broggin, Ursula Ditchburn and Bernard Simon, and deputy delegates Rose-Marie Breitenstein and Margrit Lyster.

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Landsgemeinde in Yorkshire's 'Little Switzerland' crowns memorable FOSSUK weekend



Organisation of the Swiss Abroad deputy delegates Margrui Lyster and Rose-Marie Breitenstein serenaded by Armin Löttscher

Professor Inebnit's initiative lives on

For delegates to the FOSSUK weekend, a highlight was a visit to a Yorkshire beauty spot, Hardcastle Crags, for the now traditional Lands gemeinde.

They walked through heavily scented pine forests and hillsides glowing with bluebells and wild garlic to a secluded field by the bank of Hebden Water for a picturesque ceremony conducted by Mariann Meier and Jeffrey Long.

And an unexpected visitor was the white-haired daughter of the man whose inspiration it was nearly half a century ago.

Mrs. Andrée Hastings recalled the day in 1948 when her Vaudois father, Professor Jean Inebnit, one of the founders of the Yorkshire Swiss Club, organised the first Landsgemeinde.

The last time she attended was in the early 1960s.

As she watched the alphorn playing and flag throwing she said: "This is a lovely bond with Switzerland."

"It helps people remember their origins and reinforces

their interest in what is happening in the homeland."

Mariann Meier recalled Jean Inebnit as an eminent historian at the University of Leeds, which bestowed an honorary degree on him ten months before he died in 1982.

She told the assembly: "He was a devoted Swiss, but also a convinced European who saw the role of the Swiss abroad very much as ambassadors of Switzerland."



Leading the ceremony at Hardcastle Crags, resplendent in national costume: Mariann Meier and Jeffrey Long

Northern Ireland club suspended

SPEAKING at the annual general meeting of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK, president Jeffrey Long spoke of growing concern that they been unable to get the Swiss Club Northern Ireland to meet their financial obligations to the federation.

He said that since the last AGM he had written and spoken to the club's president and treasurer but had received a negative response.

Mariann Meier said she had also written a personal letter to the president but had received no reply.

Several delegates at the meeting, held at the Craiglands Hotel, Ilkley, said they wanted the club to be expelled from FOSSUK.

But Consul General Ernst Keller said he did not consider this a good idea as at some stage people with a different view could take over the running of the club.

After a lengthy discussion

a proposal from Rose-Marie Breitenstein that the club should be suspended was approved by 16 votes to 1, with 2 abstentions.

Reporting on changes in member societies during the year the president said they had lost the Swiss Business Forum, which had amalgamated with the City Swiss

Club, the Dunfermline club had been reformed as the Fife Swiss Club and the Swiss Welfare Office and the Swiss Benevolent Society had decided to merge.

On another point Bernie Simon said he was concerned that many clubs' AGMs did not allow discussions on matters outside club activities.



Pictured (right) at a reception for delegates: Minister Thomas Fuglister with Valeria Ossola of the Unione Ticinese

'Make your voices heard,' says Minister

ONLY 14 per cent of Swiss living in the UK have applied to be able to use the postal vote in Swiss elections and referenda, Minister Thomas Fuglister, head of the Service of the Swiss Abroad, told the AGM.

He called for many more to exercise their right to vote, and said: "An ever greater number of issues being voted upon by way of referenda are of particular interest to the Swiss abroad, such as last year's vote on the Lex Friedrich."

"We can expect to see a number of other reform projects affecting the Swiss abroad being put to a referendum. I am thinking in particular of the revision of the law on citizenship and the optional old age and disability scheme. "It is important that the

Swiss abroad make their voices heard."

Efforts were being made to change the current law which stipulated that the Swiss abroad had to re-register every four years or be struck off the voters' list.

Other points made by the Minister:

- A new law on citizenship is expected to come into force on January 1, 1998. Of particular interest to the Swiss abroad is the possibility of a simplified naturalisation procedure for children of a Swiss parent.

The most important change could allow the son or daughter of a Swiss mother, born before July 1, 1985, and still living abroad, to apply for naturalisation if able to demonstrate close ties with

Switzerland, such as paying regular visits or knowledge of one of the national languages.

- The Federal Department of Foreign Affairs was doing all it could to modify a proposal to abolish the optional participation of the Swiss abroad in the old age and survivors' pension and invalidity scheme.

The Minister said that one result of the changes being proposed would prevent Swiss residents abroad making their own pension arrangements in Switzerland, where they might at any time want to return.

"The result would be an increase in the number of social welfare and hardship cases," he said.

"The Community of the Swiss Abroad would become a two-class society."

As a result members were not given a broader picture of other clubs' activities and were not aware of what FOSSUK delegates were doing on behalf of Swiss people in the UK

In his annual report the president said that the last meeting of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA), held at Brunnen in March, had been attended by three FOSSUK delegates and two deputies.

He said the delegates had taken a very active part in committee work.

Joe Brogini was on the OSA executive committee, Rose-Marie Breitenstein was a vice president of the Association for the Promotion of the OSA and also on the working party on the future of Swiss societies, Ursula Ditchburn was working with Pro Patria, Margrit Lyster with the Solidarity Fund and Bernie Simon on the working party on Europe.

- Next year's AGM will be held in the London area. In 1988 it will move to Torquay and in 1999 it will return to London for the federation's Golden jubilee.

Delegates' generosity helps to trim costs

The budget for 1996-7 presented to the AGM showed an anticipated loss during the year of £1,120.

Bernie Simon said that FOSSUK was making a loss every year, and what income they had in the bank would disappear completely within a few years unless something was done about it.

He said every effort was already being made to monitor expenses, and they were determined that the AGM itself should be self financing and not a major drain on resources.

One of the major items of expenditure in the budget was travel expenses of £1,920.

He said this included travel expenses for members of the committee to attend meetings and for the fares of three delegates to OSA council meetings in Switzerland.

Mr Simon said this was in respect of visits to Switzerland twice a year, but over the



Swiss Ambassador François Nordmann and Consul General Ernst Keller dip into their wallets to support a raffle in aid of FOSSUK finances.

last few years some of the delegates had not been claiming travel expenses.

Because of their generosity the actual cost would be less than that shown in the budget.

The president said that travel expenses for the previous year only amounted to £679. He was also happy to report that last year's AGM had produced an unusually large profit, helped by receiving a percentage of the sale of work by Swiss artists.

It was hoped that this year's AGM would break even.

Elections were a significant milestone

IN a wide-ranging speech devoted to the growing importance of the Swiss abroad, René Lenzin, editor of the Swiss Review, urged all Swiss citizens in the UK to use the opportunity they now have of taking part in the political life of Switzerland

"There is no doubt that last year's parliamentary elections marked a significant milestone for the Fifth Switzerland," he said.

"The decisive thing now is to see that the interest which has been mobilised should not be allowed to dissipate.

"One thing we in Switzerland can do is campaign for the abolition of practical hurdles and so make it easier for the Swiss abroad to exercise their right to vote."

René Lenzin revealed two high tech developments for the benefit of the Swiss abroad. One is the production of a CD-

Rom, which he described as a toolbox for Swiss living overseas.

"It will make it a very simple matter for you to discover your legal position in Switzerland on any matter, as well as obtain comprehensive information about all your civic rights and obligations," he said.

"You will also be able to use it to plan your next trip to Switzerland and to make contact with a whole range of economic, social and cultural institutions throughout Switzerland."

Another development was to make the Swiss Review itself available on the Internet. Later they intended to add current news, so that a continual flow of information about Switzerland - particularly about federal referenda and elections - would become available to PC users at any time.



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Swiss pencils make legal history in the UK

Hardly a week goes by without an ITN News report on an important court case being held somewhere in Britain. Since photographers are not permitted to record the legal proceedings ITN employ their own courtroom artist.

She is Priscilla Coleman, an attractive brunette with a soft Texan accent and it is her Caran d'Ache sketches which appear on our screens allowing us a view of legal history in the making.

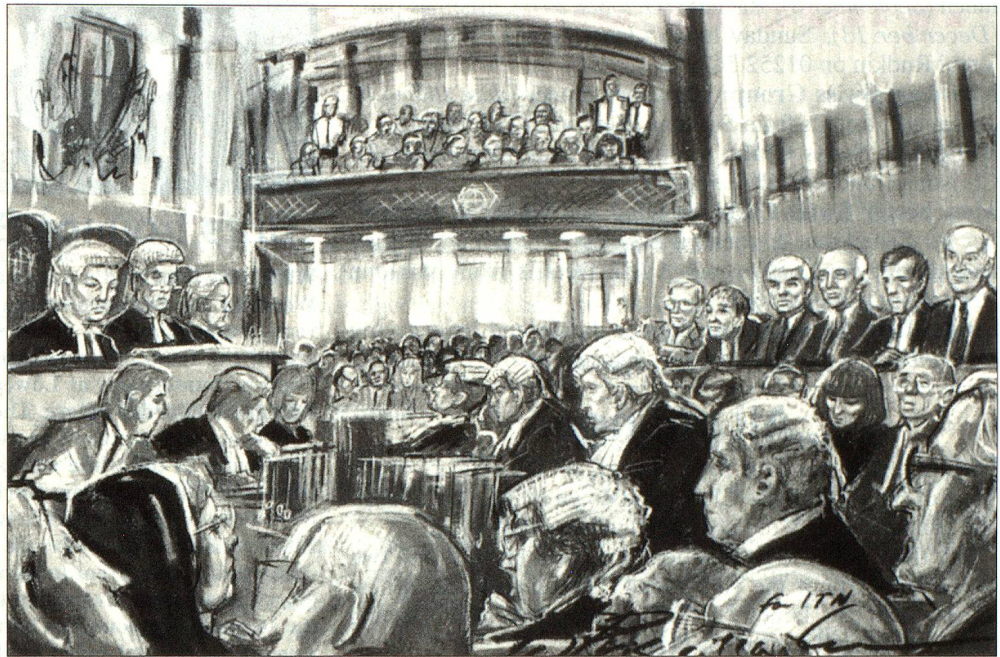
The name Caran d'Ache first appeared during the Belle Epoque, when a French cartoonist used it to sign his works. It was a pun on 'Karandasch' - the Russian word for pencil.

Priscilla with her packs of Swiss-made C d'A and sketch books has covered such newsworthy cases as the Guinness and Maxwell trials, the Birmingham Six and the Jeffrey Archer libel case. She was also making notes when Rosemary West stood in the dock.

She is sometimes asked to re-create scenes of private meetings such as Princess Diana and Mr. Fellows discussing the Princess's future or Mrs Thatcher handing her resignation to the Queen.

Priscilla travels all over Britain to attend courts and bring us the inside pictures.

Drawing in the courtroom is not permitted so she takes



Courtroom drama: One of Priscilla Coleman's impressions of a major trial, sketched with her Swiss Caran d'Ache pencils

her place with the other reporters in the press gallery where she makes shorthand notes on the participants in the scene before her. Funny little notes like 'frog face' or 'a tear in eye, tissue in hand'.

Then Priscilla retires to the press room where she quickly translates her notes into the artist's impressions we see on the News.

Often she is working to a deadline and sometimes has to produce work for the 12 o'clock news within half an hour. "First I make a swishy

outline in pencil and then use the water base and oil base Caran d'Ache pastels," Priscilla explains.

Finally she damps a sheet of kitchen paper and swabs the picture to produce shadows.

She likes C d'A for its durability and she mixes both the water and oil base colours in the same sketch

"They survive travel and weather conditions so well and take so much abuse."

she says. "The versatile chalky pastels are speedy, fantastically rich in colour coverage and great for TV."

Priscilla and her artistic courtroom skills have featured on the TV show *How Do They Do That?*

Her sketches are original works of art with historic value and can be seen at the Henderson Carter Art Gallery in Fulham.

Aileen Foletti

Webber in Manchester

A first-ever exhibition devoted to the paintings of John Webber (1751-1793) has opened in Manchester.

Webber was the Swiss artist who accompanied explorer Captain James Cook on his last expedition in 1776, and who was present when Cook was hacked to death by natives in Hawaii in 1779.

The exhibition, at the Whitworth Art Gallery until September 15, includes works drawn on the Cook expedition in the Pacific as well as watercolours made

on sketching tours in Switzerland, Italy, Derbyshire, Wales and the Wye Valley

An exhibition devoted to a Swiss cultural centre, the historic Abbey of St Gall starts an eight-month tour of the UK in September.

It will visit London, Cambridge, Manchester, Oxford, Liverpool, York and Leeds

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Coming events in the clubs

Southern Area Swiss Club: River Wey cruise and barge lunch (*September 8*); Raclette (*October 25*); Christmas party (*December 13*); Sunday lunch (*January 17*). Details from Vreni Rudkin on 01252 547948.

Aberdeen Swiss Group: Christmas dinner (*date still to be arranged*). Details from Susanna Weir on 01224 586018.

Yorkshire Swiss Club: Annual luncheon (*November 2*); Christmas luncheon (*December 7*).

Manchester Swiss Club: Bowling and barbecue (*September 8*); Sauerkraut & wienerli evening (*October 5*); Christmas dinner dance (*November 15*). Details from Mariann Reutter on 01260 273681.

Swiss Rifle Association: Dinner dance and prizegiving (*November 23*). Details from Urs Schaerer on 0181 850 4117.



Brits trounce Swiss diplomats

WHEN Switzerland's national soccer team met England at Wembley for the opening match of Euro 96 they achieved a very commendable 1-1 draw. Similar success, however, did not attend the team of Swiss diplomats when they played their English counterparts at Lower Sydenham sports club in New Beckenham the day before. The Swiss lost 5-0.

The players pictured above (with Ambassador François Nordmann in the white suit) are: *back row left to right, Wils, Duvoisin, Sulzer, Borer, Burkhardt, Bühler, Jaun, Furgler; front row, Vögeli, Renfer, Klaus, Dünner, Kessler, Regli, Litscher, Bortis.* Photo: Leonie Röthlisberger Pépin.

Another soccer event to coincide with Euro 96 was Eurofans 96, when amateur five-a-side teams consisting of players from the 16 qualifying countries battled it out in Sheffield. The Swiss won one match and ended up third in their group.

FOSSUK president Jeffrey Long says he would like to keep the five-a-side team together, and perhaps also form a full playing team of 11. More details are available from him at 30 Finsbury Drive, Bradford BD2 1QA.

All change

Feeling that it was time for a change, all the officers of the West of Scotland Swiss Club stood down at the club's AGM and announced they did not intend to be re-appointed.

But there were no nominations for replacements, and two of the stalwarts of the club found themselves back in new roles – secretary James Sheffield as president, and outgoing president Trudy Drysdale as deputy.

● *Yorkshire Swiss Club* has a new secretary, Caroline Goulden, and a new welfare officer, Audrey Kagi.

At the AGM held in Bradford members of the club voted to increase their subscription to FOSSUK.

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