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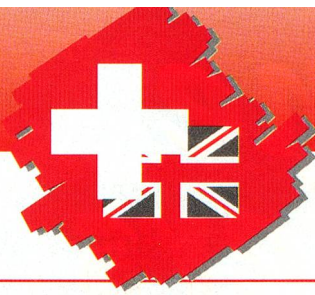
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Switzerland in the UK



Photo: Adrian Lent

Birthday wishes for Dr Egli from FOSSUK's Jeffrey Long

Our centenarian celebrates his birthday – in a history museum

Dr Hans Egli, the doyen of the Swiss community in the UK, celebrated his 100th birthday in style on March 17, surrounded by his large family and many Swiss compatriots and English friends.

His day started with the arrival of hundreds of cards and a huge bouquet of flowers from Ambassador and Mrs François Nordman.

But there was no telegram from the Queen, much to the disappointment of Laura Kaufman, who has been Dr Egli's companion for the last 20 years.

"I had been assured he was going to get one, but it seems that only applies to British citizens," she said. "Had I known this I would have done some discreet lobbying. After all, he did so much for Anglo-Swiss relations."

There was, however, a

telegram from Social Services Minister Alistair Darling, wishing him a most enjoyable day.

And so it turned out. More than 80 guests greeted Dr Egli at a party held in a local history museum in Hampstead. Among them were Consul General Robert Müller, FOSSUK president Jeffrey Long and presidents of many Swiss societies.

There were two birthday cakes. One, from the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, was presented by Walter Gündhart, former London correspondent of the *NZZ*, a role filled by Dr Egli himself from 1926 to 1974.

The other cake had been baked by his granddaughter, Tara Kemp. The family guests included his two sons, two daughters, eight of his 11 grandchildren and two of his four great-grandchildren.

Pestalozzi Village launches unique course for teenagers

Following a two year pilot scheme the Pestalozzi Village Trust and its UK partner, Hastings College, are throwing their unique International Baccalaureate programme open to the wider international community.

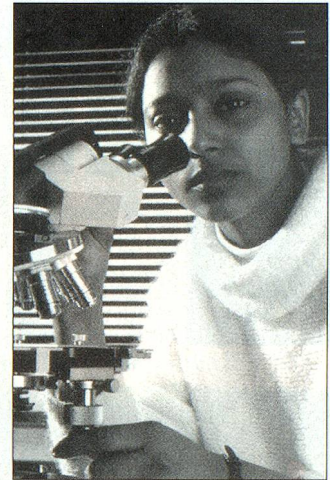
"While we are expecting more students from overseas, and have been receiving many enquiries from Switzerland, we are keen to encourage more local students to get involved," said the programme's coordinator, Chris Morrell.

"Naturally, that includes the children of Swiss nationals in the UK."

The two year IB course presents students aged 16 to 19 with a wider choice than the traditional A level curriculum, in keeping with the Pestalozzi commitment to develop "heads, hearts and hands."

The trust takes its name from Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, Swiss humanitarian and educationalist who provided help for child victims of the Napoleonic wars.

It was established in 1957 with the purchase of a 70 hectare estate near Battle in the rolling countryside of



A Pestalozzi IB student seen in the lab at Hastings College

East Sussex. Parents, teachers and potential students are being invited to an open day on June 1.

"There will be lots of activities to get involved in," said Chris Morrell, "as well as a chance to talk in detail about the course. Our current students will be leading many of the activities, so the information available will be first hand."

Mr Morrell can be contacted on 01424 442 222. Details are also available on www.hastings.ac.uk

Piccard-Jones: record breakers

It was one of the most impressive examples of Anglo-Swiss cooperation since Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and other pioneers created the Swiss skiing industry and Sir Arnold Lunn invented the slalom.

The breathtaking exploit of the Breitling Orbiter in circumnavigating the globe was a joint effort in which both countries can take pride. Not only the courageous co-pilots Bertrand Piccard and Brian Jones, but the skills of many others, such as meteorologist Pierre Eckert and balloon designer Don Cameron. They all played a vital part in the success of the record-breaking enterprise, and helped write a brave new chapter in the history of man's achievements against nature.

The world wide interest in the 126,062 mile flight was a big boost for the starting point, Château d'Oex, now the undisputed ballooning capital of the world.

Anniversary weekend

Plans for marking the 50th anniversary of the founding of FOSSUK are now well in hand.

Celebrations will start on Friday, June 4, with a Swiss Radio lecture at the Swiss Embassy in London, which will be the scene the following day of the federation's AGM. Later there will be a dinner dance at the Carisbrooke Hall, Marble Arch.

The celebrations end on Sunday, June 6, with a boat trip from Westminster, past the Millennium Dome to the Thames Barrier.

Application forms for these events can be obtained from any Swiss society, or from Rose-Marie Breitenstein on 0171 727 4113.

Moved

Since the Consulate General in Manchester moved to its new location at Portland Street two years ago, we are still receiving mail forwarded from our previous address at Sunley Tower. Royal Mail informs us that they are going to return such mail in the future, so please send your mail to the current address: *The Consulate General of Switzerland, Portland Tower, 6th Floor Portland Street, Manchester M1 3LD. (Tel: 0161 236 2933; Fax: 0161 236 4689).*

The consular district consists of Cheshire, Cleveland,

Derbyshire, Durham, Greater Manchester, Humberside, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Merseyside, Northumberland, North Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, West Yorkshire, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Isle of Man.

The Consulate General now has this email address which can be used for non-confidential messages: swis@cgmanchester.freeseerve.co.uk

I avail myself of the opportunity to inform you that comments or requests for information from Swiss nationals residing in the consular district of Manchester are always welcome and appreciated by the undersigned. – **Max Inhelder, Consul General of Switzerland.**

Tripled

The rejuvenated West of Scotland Swiss Club is going from strength to strength. Treasurer Anita Dick writes: "Our secretary, Shula Spain, has worked extremely hard in the last three years to triple our membership after the club neared extinction."

Regular events that have helped enhance the club's popularity are the bi-monthly Stammtisch in Glasgow and a get-together for children of members

held every Saturday morning. More details from Shula Spain on 0141 339 5828.

Memories

Your article in the last *Swiss Review* about the Swiss student fraternity brought back memories from childhood.

Born and growing up in Zofingen, I well remember the Studentfest with a parade through our lovely town. There was much singing, playing pranks and hilarity among the students, ending with a ball to which the local beauties were invited. – **Sonja Newington-Lieb, St Mary, Jersey.**

EU rip-off?

I notice over the years you rarely publish letters from the Swiss living abroad. Is it maybe you are afraid of the exposure of the 'Powers that be' in the Father/Motherland who are so determined to join the great EU rip-off at the expense of the Swiss people, as well as the rest of us? – **Maurice Baudet, an Anglo-Swiss and a voice from the Fifth Switzerland, Great Missenden, Bucks.**

● *The editor replies: On the contrary, we warmly welcome letters from readers. Any views on the subject of Switzerland and the EU should be sent to the address in the next column.*

How to contact the editor

Reports of Swiss society activities and coming events, and articles and correspondence for the 'Switzerland in the UK' section of the *Swiss Review*, should go to the editor, Derek Meakin, at Europa House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP. Tel: 01625 855 000; fax: 01625 855 128.

His email address is: dmeakin@europress.co.uk.

Enquiries regarding advertising should go to Jeffrey Long, 30 Finsbury Drive, Bradford BD2 1QA. Tel/fax: 01274 588 189.

● The 'Switzerland in the UK' supplement appears four times a year. The deadline for the next issue containing UK news, to be distributed in July, is May 17.

Dr. Louis Guenin
B.D.S., L.D.S., R.C.S. (Eng.)

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'Swiss abroad should stand for Parliament'

UK delegates to the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, meeting in Berne, joined colleagues from other countries in expressing the hope that more candidates from the 5th Switzerland would stand in federal elections. While they realised it would not be easy for them, they felt it would help make people in the homeland more aware of the large number of Swiss citizens spread around the globe.

Delegates also discussed the agenda for the forthcoming Congress of the Swiss Abroad, which will focus on negotiations with the European Union.

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British designer brings the Fête des Vignerons right up to date



The 134th City Swiss Club Banquet & Ball

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**The 134th Banquet & Ball to be held in
The Ballroom at Claridge's on Saturday, 6 November 1999**

If you are not a member, but would like to receive further information and an invitation later in the year, please complete the slip below and return it to the City Swiss Club.

Please reply to: Julie Streader, City Swiss Club c/o Secure Trust Banking Group PLC,
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Name Tel. no

Address

Society (if any) RE.:134th BANQUET & BALL



Switzerland in the UK

She's a British citizen. But she has Welsh, Irish, English and Polish blood in her veins. She normally works in New York, but for the last four months, apart from brief visits back to the States, Catherine Zuber has been in Vevey, masterminding the making of the costumes for the thousands of townsfolk and villagers who, this summer, will be acting in one of the most spectacular open air performances ever staged.

The Fête des Vignerons is unique. Held only four times a century, it completely takes over the lakeside town of Vevey and the winegrowing villages that straddle the lake shore or nestle in the vineyard covered hills that encircle it.

Why, then, should a woman who was born in Harrow, Middlesex, lived the first nine years of her life in Cardiff, and then moved to the USA to find fame and fortune, be entrusted with

such a prestigious role that any Swiss costume designer would give their eye teeth for? Apparently it's just a question of knowing the right person at the right time.

When I tracked down Catherine to the backstage of a theatre in Boston, Massachusetts, where she was on a flying visit to supervise a new production, she told me she had been invited to take on the task by the director of the Fête, François Rochaix, with whom she had worked in the States.

"He thought my style was appropriate, so I got the job," she said. "But I've no Swiss connections, even though a lot of people think my name is Swiss. My father was born in Poland, came to England as a refugee and served in the British army during the war.

"I've been working on the costumes for the last three years, examining lots of archives, going over the sets of pre-



vious Fêtes, studying ancient cantonal costumes. I've based my designs on traditional styles, but I've given them a modern spirit."

Officially, tickets for the 15 performances were sold out months ago, but a few have been held in reserve by the Swiss Travel Centre in London. Contact them by ringing 0171 734 1921.

Catherine Zuber (above right) and four of the costumes designed for the 1999 Fête des Vignerons. Pictured left: the grandiose setting for the last Fête held in 1977.



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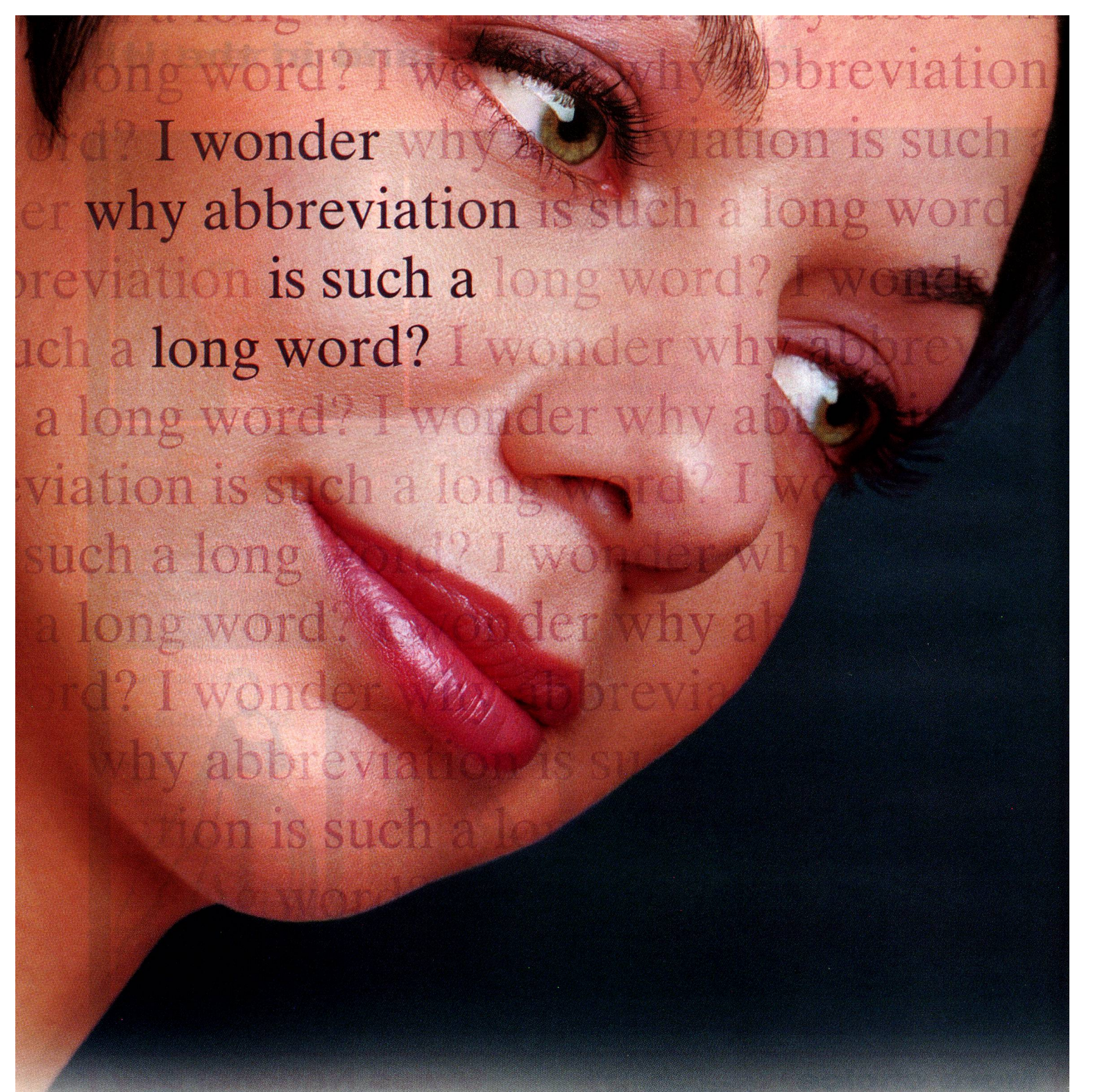
We follow familiar traditions, with a speech by a representative of the Swiss Embassy in London, but we also offer everybody a new, enlarged programme, with:

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- Games for children and adults.
 - Traditional Swiss music in the afternoon
 - Dance music in the evening
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Mariann Meier: A life of devotion to our community

For the last half century Mariann Meier has been by far and away one of the most outstanding personalities in the Swiss community in the United Kingdom.

As FOSSUK secretary Rose-Marie Breitenstein says: "She was a truly remarkable woman whose leadership and devoted service will leave an indelible mark on the history of our community."

Mariann was born in Liestal on August 10, 1914.



Mariann Meier as many people will remember her: wearing her national costume

After a lifetime of service to the Swiss community in the United Kingdom, Mariann Meier has died, just six months short of her 85th birthday. She had a massive brain haemorrhage on February 2 and died nine days later. Her funeral at the Swiss church was attended by friends from all over Britain.

She came to England at the age of 18, as chaperone and French teacher to a family of English children in Belgravia. Shortly after her arrival she attended the City Swiss Club Ball at the Dorchester, where she met Walter Meier from Glatfelden. Three years later they were married in Basle.

Back in London, Walter became a founder member of FOSSUK and other Swiss societies, and Mariann her-

self soon became immersed in society activities. When Walter died tragically in 1961, at the age of 53, Mariann not only single handed brought up their four children – Heidi, Erika, Pauline and Peter – but became even more involved.

For seven years she was editor of the Swiss Observer, was president of the New Helvetic Society for 15 years, elected a delegate to the Council of the Swiss Abroad,

and was a very active member of many other Swiss societies.

Pastor Gottfried Locher said at her funeral: "She led a full life to the last, maintaining her love of music and the theatre, and living by the principle of 'keine Feier ohne Meier'."

Her writing was prolific, as readers of the *Swiss Review* will know. Fifty years ago she wrote a book, *The Young Traveller in Switzerland*, which did much to teach British children about the incredible variety of life in Switzerland.

She also became the self-appointed historian of the Swiss community, keeping extensive records of club life and activities, and was always a very welcome speaker at events all over the country.

She was a real Baselbieter – and it showed!

Mariann Meier was not only a lady of high principles. She was also a Baselbieter by birth, which means she was quite outspoken if necessary.

Whenever she spoke she commanded attention. One could immediately feel that this lady had something to say and that she was going to say it no matter if one liked it or not.

It is not hard to see why, within her large family, she had been given the nickname 'Madame Chairman'. Her comments were to the point, straightforward, leaving out anything irrelevant to the issue at stake.

Although Mariann's honesty was not always easy to take, I am in no doubt about

how much we owe to her. It was thanks to 'Madame Chairman' that things got done, that good thoughts were put into real action.

Behind that impressive, and sometimes irritating, façade was a person who truly and passionately cared for others. But it was never just a matter of words, and her principles were codes of action rather than idealistic thoughts. She was not interested in what could have been done but what should be done. The alliance of a strong will and a heart bursting with charity and compassion made her unforgettable for those who met her.

– Pastor Gottfried Locher, during his address at Mariann Meier's funeral

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0171 265 8588 or fax us on: 0171 790 5162 and ask for Michael



Aberdeen Swiss Club: Walk (June 12); First of August celebration (July 31). Christmas meal and AGM (November 27). Details from Susanna Weir (01224 586 018).

Fyfe Swiss Club: National Day celebrations (August 1). Details from Heidi McGhie on 01383 412 635.

Manchester Swiss Club: Midsummer outing (June 24); National Day celebrations (July 31); Bowling &

COMING EVENTS

Barbecue (September 5 or 12); Bernerplatte evening (October 9). Details from Mariann Reutter on 01260 273 681.

Midlands Swiss Society: Wine and cheese at the Roberts, Lichfield (May 22); Dinner at Café Rouge, Stratford on Avon (June 19). Details from Glynne Roberts on 01543 250 737.

Southern Area Swiss Club: Cheese, wine and lace, talk and demonstration (June 10); Beach picnic (July 4); August 1 celebration (July 31). Details from Vreni Rudkin on 01252 547 948.

Swiss Club Edinburgh: Walk to Fotherstone Reservoir (June 21). Details from Ursula Ross on 0131 539 2543.

Swiss Club Tyne Tees: AGM, Bridge Toby Hotel, Croxdale (May 16); Barbecue at Hardwick Hall Hotel, Sedgfield (June 20);

National Day celebration (August 1). Details from Nelly Scott-Niederberger on 0191 519 0956.

Torbay Swiss Club: Coffee morning, Oddfellows Hall (June 3); Wildlife Trust talk, Oddfellows Hall (June 16); Visit to Shaldon Zoo (July 21). August 1 celebration (August 1). Details from Max Singer on 01803 842 355.

Unione Ticinese: Barbecue, Hurstpierpoint (June 27); Autumn family outing (September 26); Castagnasta (October 16). Details from Valeria Ossola on 0171 937 6631.

Yorkshire Swiss Club: National Day lunch, The Swiss Connection, Hebden Bridge (August 1).

Secretaries of Swiss societies are asked to write to the editor before May 26 with details of events planned to take place after July 19.

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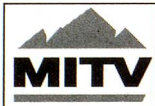
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