

Switzerland in the UK

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After being hidden in a storeroom for 14 years...

London's giant Appenzell painting goes back home

For 27 years it had pride of place in one of London's most popular restaurants. It was a gigantic oil painting, 7.5 metres long and 2 metres deep in the distinctive style of the farmer-painters of Appenzell.

It typified the unmistakable Appenzeller landscape, with cows, goats, houses, flags and country people in their traditional costumes.

Its home was the wall of one of the four restaurants that occupied the basement of the towering Swiss Centre in London's Leicester Square.

It had been commissioned by the designer of the Swiss Centre, Justus Dahinden, a leading Lucerne architect, but there is now no record of the name of the artist.

By 1992 major changes were under way at the Swiss Centre. Mövenpick, who owned the four restaurants, decided to close them down and replace them with a London version of their flagship Mövenpick Marché.

And that meant disposing of all the fittings and decorations, including the celebrated painting.

The contract to carry out the work was given to a second generation London Swiss, Max Ott.

He had started a cabinet making business in Tufnell Park, London in 1954, specialising in interior carpentry, and in partnership with another Swiss carried out small building projects.

He and his team soon moved out all the unwanted material in the four restaurants, but when they came to take down the painting they faced an awkward problem.

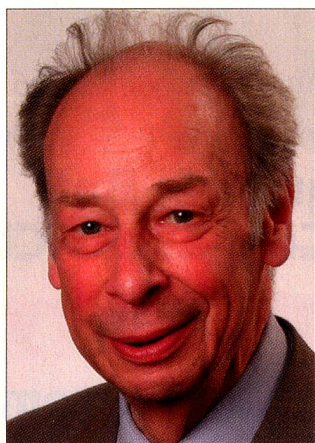
Being a true Swiss, Max Ott hadn't the heart to destroy the



The painting being lovingly restored by artists and craftsmen steeped in the Appenzell country style

painting, which he admired as a real work of art. But, given its dimensions, he couldn't think of another use for it.

Reluctantly he rolled it up and put it in one of his



Photograph by Photocart (Hannstein)

Max Ott: The man who saved the 'lost' painting from being destroyed

storerooms, hoping that one day he would be able to find a new home for it. And there it remained, completely ignored, until last year when Max, now approaching his 80th birthday, decided he needed more storage space and set about clearing out his storerooms.

Re-discovering the forgotten painting, he realised he had a moral obligation to find a suitable home for it. He turned for advice to Albert Kunz, the former director of Switzerland Tourism in London, and on whose initiative the Swiss Centre had been built by a consortium of his then employers, the Swiss Bank Corporation and Swissair.

He talked to Urs Eberhard, deputy director of Switzerland Tourism and himself a former head of the London office.

And he in turn sought the help of Appenzell Tourism, who

came up with an ideal location - the summit station of Mount Säntis, which is visited by half a million people every year.

So the decision was taken. But first the ravages of time had made their mark. Roland Inauen, curator of the Appenzell Museum, was asked to give his advice, and professional restorers were called in.

A place of honour has been found for it at the top of Mount Säntis, and the icing on the cake is that the Lord Mayor of Westminster, has agreed to officially unveil the spruced up painting that was such a familiar sight in its former home in the heart of London, now back in the land that gave it its inspiration.

Want to find out more
For the full story go to: 
www.swissreview.co.uk/story/197

Switzerland in the UK has its own Internet site, continually bringing you up to the minute news of the latest events as well as major stories from the most recent issues and links to other interesting sites in both the UK and Switzerland. To access it go to:
www.swissreview.co.uk



SWITZERLAND IN THE UK
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• Featured more news of the Swiss abroad
• The Swiss Return Home
• The Swiss in the UK

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Committed to Excellence

How a school trip turned into a love affair with Switzerland

It was a school trip to the Bernese Oberland that was to change 12 year old Arthur Broadhurst's life.

The Manchester schoolboy, travelling by mountain railway and cable car, was amazed by the dramatic landscape, the peaks and glaciers, and equally impressed by the people he met.

A few years later, on holiday in Cornwall, he met a girl from Sumiswald in the Emmental called Hildi Reist. It was love at first sight.

They married in Berne, and for the next five years Arthur immersed himself in learning German and becoming absorbed in Swiss life and customs before returning to Manchester and carving out a career as the city's leading valuation surveyor.

Now he finds himself in a new role, and one that ties him even more closely to Switzerland. He has been appointed Honorary Swiss Consul for the North of England. The latest in a long line of honorary consuls, consuls and consuls general who for almost a century have been dedicated to furthering relations between Switzerland and a vast area stretching from the North Midlands to Scotland.

Of his new role Arthur said:

"It is a huge honour that Switzerland has conferred on me.

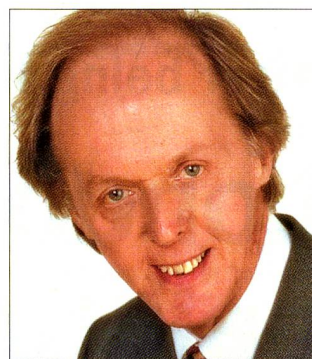
"Both Hildi and I are looking forward to the challenge it presents and will try hard to justify the confidence placed in us.

"I now want to do all I can to support the Swiss community in the North of England and to develop friendships and help wherever I can.

"The other part of my role will be to develop and establish Switzerland's interests in economic, scientific and cultural fields, which will benefit from the experience I have had for more than 30 years with the business community in Manchester and elsewhere in the North. I am also looking forward to maintaining links with civic authorities and local institutions."

The address of the new honorary consulate is 5th floor, Church House, 90 Deansgate, Manchester M2 2GP. The phone number is 0161 833 0033, and the email address is arthurbroadhurst@thorburn-vaalers.co.uk.

Want to find out more
For the full story go to: 
www.swissreview.co.uk/story/190



Arthur Broadhurst: 'After my visit I was smitten by anything Swiss'

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Please also contact: Julie to learn more about the Club and/or receive a membership form.

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Building a reputation for Swiss quality in the UK

There is a little corner of London that is turning into a mini Switzerland. Here a group of Swiss workers have set up home, from where they travel each day to use Swiss materials and Swiss expertise in a variety of different building projects.

It all began five years ago



Martin Lipp: 'More and more people are insisting on high quality'

when Martin Lipp decided there were excellent opportunities in the UK for expanding his general contracting and interior decorating business.

Since then this small but dynamic company has gone from strength to strength as its reputation has soared, particularly in the London area.

One exceptional project currently under way is the complete renovation of a two level penthouse near Hyde Park, but enquiries are now coming in from all parts of the country.

While the head office is in Lucerne, Martin Lipp himself is now spending more and more time in London. There is also a project leader who stays in London three days every week, and a group of foremen who are here permanently.

To mark the fifth anniversary the entire team has been for a sailing holiday off the coast of Majorca.

Said Martin Lipp: "It was our way of saying thank you to our

staff for the way they have really helped us establish ourselves in the UK."

Asked for the reason for his company's success he said: "Our slogan is 'Swiss quality - on time - always' and that is just what a typical Lipp client expects. We find that more and more people are insisting on high quality when it comes to home renovation.

"And that quality comes from qualified Swiss craftsmen who have all served a lengthy Swiss apprenticeship.

"All manufacturing takes place in Switzerland, and all fitting and finishing work is carried out by expert tradesmen under Swiss management."

However, his experience is that good craftsmen are not easy to find in London, and that he can get work done in half the time taken by British builders.

And the future? "To build on past successes - and to work on even more interesting, extravagant and luxurious projects."



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: Charter House, 1-3 Charter Way, Macclesfield SK10 2NG. Tel: 01625 442 707.

His email address is: editor@meakin.net.

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 January, is December 21.

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Swiss Church London

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Thursday, 23 November 2006
7:30pm
Mein Name ist Eugen (2005)
"Adventurous for everybody!"
Language: Swiss German
From 6 years old

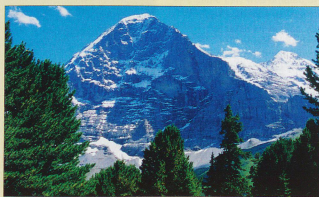
Thursday, 11 January 2007 7:30pm
Grounding - die letzten Tage der Swissair (2006)
"A moving documentary drama"
Language: Swiss German, French subtitles

Thursday, 8 February 2007
7:30pm
Snowwhite (2005)
"Party, sex, drugs and two lakes."
Language: German, English subtitles
From 15 years old.

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Spiritual home for the Swiss in the UK since 1762

Will the Eiger be our greatest explorer's toughest challenge



The dreaded North Face of the Eiger has claimed many lives. Now its formidable reputation is to be tested by a man who admits he has a fear of heights.

The authoritative Guinness Book of Records calls him "the world's greatest living explorer." And it's easy to see why. The man who can claim to be a direct descendant of the Holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne and who was once auditioned to replace Sean Connery as James Bond, is a living example of the most extreme kind of daredevil, for whom anything goes.

But Sir Ranulph Twisleton-Wykeham-Fiennes, Bt, OBE – "but please call me Ran" – has had to pay the price for his insatiable curiosity and his unstoppable wanderlust. Frostbite has been his main antagonist, resulting in having his fingers amputated at the half knuckle, and with frost scarred feet and arthritic hips.

Despite this he has a record for exploration second to none. It started when he was at school at Eton, sneaking out at night to climb the college roofs, then when he joined first the Royal Scots Greys and afterwards the elite SAS and proved the truth of its proud motto, "Who dares wins".

But that was only the beginning. He joined the army of the Sultan of Oman, where the sultan awarded him his bravery medal. Then left the heat of the desert to try his luck in the coldest spots on earth – the two poles.

He achieved record after record: the first surface journey around the north and south poles, the furthest north unsupported walk, the first unsupported crossing of the Antarctic Continent and the longest unsupported polar journey in history.

No wonder the Queen awarded him the OBE "for human endeavour". No wonder Princes Charles said of him: "My admiration for Ran is unbounded, and thank God he exists. The world would be a far duller place without him."

And now, at the age of 62, he is determined to do the near impossible – to climb the North Face of the Eiger. The so called Nordwand, the Death Wall – that over the years has claimed so many lives.

And what is even stranger, he admits that he is "terrified of heights." The epic climb planned for next March has two aims: to prove he can do it, and to raise at least £1 million for Marie Curie Cancer Care. But he has no doubt of the dangers he faces. Stephen Venables, president of the Alpine Club, says in the Sunday Times: "It is simply one of the greatest climbs in the world – a fantastic journey through a stupendous vertical landscape... But one you approach with respect. Get caught up in a storm halfway up that mile high concave shelf and you could be fighting for your life."

As so many did before him – and lost.

- To support Ranulph Fiennes in his epic climb you can donate at: www.mariecurie.org.uk/EigerChallenge.



Sir Ranulph Fiennes: Preparing to undertake the near impossible

What's been happening in Berne?

21% of UK Swiss now have the vote

The 90 year campaign of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad to give the vote to Swiss citizens living overseas has achieved its first major success with the passing of the 100,000 'magic milestone'.

In fact the total number is now approaching the 108,000 mark. The OSA's motivation is two fold, said Dr Wyder. "Everyday we experience the great concern felt by many of our compatriots abroad regarding the wellbeing of their homeland. We are also aware that many of our fellow citizens abroad consider it an essential part of their Swiss identity to have a personal influence on important decisions."

"It is therefore our duty to make political participation a reality for those who believe it to be important."

"On the other hand it is also

clear that our nation has a lot to gain from allowing its citizens abroad to share their experiences and take part in debates and elections."

"But, he said, the OSA had no intention of resting on its laurels and the campaign for voting rights was continuing unabated."

"According to Swiss Federal Law, citizens with voting rights living abroad need to re-apply to vote every four years. We consider this is nothing more than meaningless red tape and bureaucratic plicanism. "We will continue to campaign until the obligation to re-register is done away with once and for all."

Meanwhile he wanted to remind Swiss Abroad about their obligation to re-register in order to prevent their voting rights being taken away from them. He said the OSA was also lobbying for the rapid introduction

Swiss Abroad get a new Ambassador

Berne has said a temporary goodbye to Ambassador Peter Sutter, for the last four years in charge of the Service for the Swiss Abroad and who has now been appointed Swiss Ambassador to the Philippines and Palau.

He has been replaced by Ambassador Markus Bortlin who knows the department well as he was deputy director before spending several years at the Swiss Embassy in Sweden. In recent years Ambassador Sutter has been responsible for arranging for help for Swiss nationals caught up in various crises around the world, including the terrorists attacks in New York and Bali, the Christmas Eve Asian tsunami and, more recently, concerns about the possible spread of avian flu.



Ambassador Bortlin: Our new man at the top is back in the department he knows well

The answer is: 'Quite a lot.' Here we summarise some of the latest developments of importance to Swiss expatriates in the UK as reported to the FOSSUK AGM in Exeter by Dr Rudolph Wyder (above), the Director of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, and Beat Kaser of the Swiss Foreign Ministry



of the electronic vote, adding "it is only a matter of time before the Internet and SMS are opened up as additional channels for casting votes. The sooner this happens the better. Not just for the sake of Swiss Abroad but in the simple interest of direct democracy which will gradually begin to lose its meaning if it fails to embrace the communications media of the 21st and coming generation."

Beat Kaser also congratulated the Swiss Abroad on passing the 100,000 mark, and said there are now 4,235 Swiss nationals in the UK able to vote, compared to 3,933 in 2004. It meant that now the Swiss Abroad were theoretically in a position to launch an initiative.

But he warned that "this encouraging development also conceals certain risks."

"It is possible that, thanks to their growing numbers, the Swiss Abroad could one day determine

the outcome of a federal vote, in the same way that Italian voters living abroad were a significant factor in the defeat of Mr Berlusconi. "In Switzerland we have almost witnessed the same kind of scenario at recent important votes, for example on the deployment of armed military personnel abroad."

"Just imagine for a moment if, in the future, the voice of Swiss citizens living abroad were to tip the balance of a vote, for example in favour of the privatisation of Swisscom. This would certainly create an uproar on the losing side and could prompt them to reopen the debate on – or even place in question – the right of the Swiss Abroad to vote."

"We should be careful not to paint an unduly black picture. But the OSA could find itself suddenly drawn into the political arena. It would be well advised to start preparing itself today."

The remarkable scene in the National Council Chamber of the Swiss Parliament, when the Council of the Swiss Abroad occupied the seats normally used by Swiss MPs. It was Parliament's symbolic gesture to mark the achievement of persuading more than 100,000 Swiss overseas to apply for the vote. Note the union jack at the top left and the UK's Joe Broggini (ringed) sitting just below the podium.



The AGM speeches by Dr Wyder and Beat Kaser can be found in full at: www.swissreview.co.uk/story/193 and www.swissreview.co.uk/story/195

Consulates close as number of Swiss Abroad increases

One subject of particular concern to Swiss living north of Birmingham has been this year's closure of the Swiss Consulate General in Manchester.

And this is far from being the only one to shut down. Dr Wyder revealed that while the number of Swiss moving abroad between 1990 and the end of 2005 increased by a massive 180,000, the number of consulates fell by 14 to the current total of 47.

"So, within just 15 years practically every fourth consulate has disappeared," he said.

"An on-site presence is in many cases indispensable, such as when measures need to be taken during emergencies and disasters or when welfare cases need to be administered. The consulate also acts as a contact point and information centre for the economy, not to mention the invaluable services it provides with regard



Foreign Minister Micheline Calmy-Rey: Switzerland's open, pluralistic culture is a plus, but lacks of money

to issuing visas and providing assistance to ever growing numbers of tourists."

He said these concerns had been discussed with Foreign Minister Mrs Calmy Rey and she agreed with their assessment. "But in the end," he said, "it is Parliament that decides the extent of Switzerland's international presence based on its budget decisions."

Biometric passports ready

The new biometric Swiss passports, which contain machine readable electronic data about the holder, are now available at the Swiss Embassy in London.

They will be valid for five years, and the cost is £1,250. London is one of only eight embassies around the world that has now taken delivery of the new equipment that is able to electronically record biometric data.

"Because of the complexity of the system anyone wishing to obtain one of these new passports will have to make a personal visit to the embassy."

However it is advisable to first ring the embassy on 020

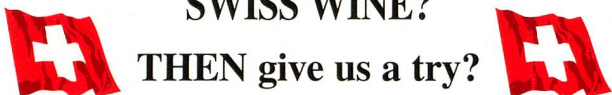


7616 6000 and make an appointment. To save time you should also ask for an application form which you can fill in before your visit. Also you should note that it might take up to two months before you receive your passport.

Thanks

The FOSSUK committee would like to thank donors of prizes, Swiss societies and others for their support, particularly: The Montcalm Hotel Nikko, London; Purely Swiss Ltd (www.purelyswiss.co.uk), Switzerland Tourism, St Moritz Restaurant, London, dental practitioner Dr Louis Guenin, R&B Wines, René Sella (Appenzel Bern), author Edith Groll, the Swiss Embassy.

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Mums and toddlers have fun at the Swiss church

The Swiss church in London is broadening its activities for the benefit of Swiss families living in the capital.

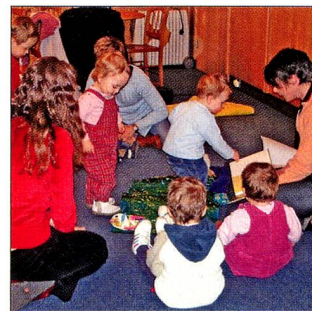
It all began two years ago with the launching of a toddlers' group, to which 15 families now belong. There are lots of toys for children to play with, and once a month there is a special animated session which includes songs, stories, arts and crafts and games.

Said Valérie Lehmann: "It's an opportunity for parents to make friends and exchange information, and for children to meet others of similar age with the same mother tongue."

Now these efforts are being extended to older children, with a new series of family activities including picnics and get togethers in playgrounds, parks and museums.

Forthcoming events are:

- Saturday, November 11 – Visit to the Science Museum.
- Sunday, December 3 – Preparation of Christmas decorations.
- Sunday, December 17 –



Christmas family service.

- January (date yet to be announced) – Visit to the Museum of Childhood.

Last year the church introduced a creche during all Sunday services, which is now held on the first and third Sunday of each month. It encourages children of all ages to discover for themselves different arts and crafts activities.

The church's family programme is available by email, flyer and in the Swiss Church News.

For further details look at www.swisschurchlondon.org.uk, or contact Valérie Lehmann direct at: lehmann@fsmail.net.

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90 years in the service of the community

The London group of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique was founded on June 8, 1916. A year later the work of the society was considered important enough to warrant a full-time paid secretary.

How times have changed! The work is nowadays entirely voluntary and much appreciated. It should be noted that the early predecessors of our present honorary officers were looking after a society with 600 members and there were no computers.

In those early years the New Helvetic Society was heavily involved in finding Swiss correspondents for English newspapers and in the formation

By **REGULA MARSH-HILFIKER**
President of the New Helvetic Society

of a study group examining economic and commercial issues.

This led to the conclusion that a Swiss Chamber of Commerce in London would be desirable and resulted in the first appointment of a commercial attaché at the Swiss Legation – now the Swiss Embassy – in 1918.

The society was also instrumental in creating the Organisation of Swiss Abroad in Switzerland.

In 1919 a few influential members of the society and the City Swiss Club got together and

launched the Swiss Observer which, for many years afterwards, was a magazine for the whole Swiss community in the United Kingdom.

The society has been active ever since, organising talks, meetings, musical soirées and much more. Here are just a few lesser known activities:

- 1926: The society was asked to sell 1st of August badges for the first time – and we still do so in 2006.

- June 1946: The society assisted in presenting 100 sets of furniture to help British families after the war, a task undertaken by the Women's Voluntary Service.

- 1966: The society actively participated in the celebration of the 675th anniversary of the Swiss Confederation at Wimbledon Town Hall on August 1st and at the same time celebrated its own Golden Jubilee.

- In the seventies, the society continued to be the official forum for discussing problems affecting Swiss abroad.

- Since 1984 the format of having an informal reception following meetings was

established and still continues to this day. Then in 1985 the publication of the Swiss Observer came to an end.

- 1991: 700th anniversary of the Swiss Confederation, 75th anniversary of the New Helvetic Society in London. Both still going strong.

- In the last 15 years, the society has carried on in the spirit of earlier members by organising talks, round table discussions, concerts, films and outings.

Today, our lively committee is very happy to develop the society further through its tradition of informing members about Swiss matters of interest to Swiss Abroad.

A highlight this year has been the celebration of the society's 90th anniversary with a meal at the Tate Modern in London, an institution with strong Swiss links.

No names have been mentioned in this article as the list would be too long, but our thanks go to all former and current members, council members, presidents, supporters, lecturers, consuls, ambassadors and some federal councillors.

Without them the London group of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique would not be what it is today.

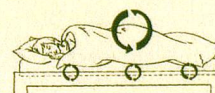


The New Helvetic Society banner: part of the collection of UK Swiss society banners which has been on display at the Museum of the Swiss Abroad in Geneva

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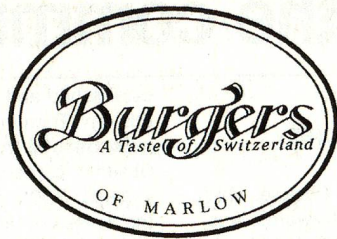
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At last – a Swiss tartan!

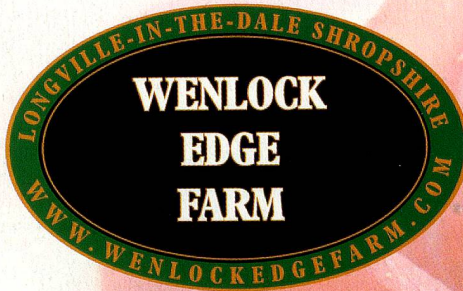
With the Swiss Embassy's growing interest in what's going on north of the border, cultivating Scottish ministers and encouraging new cultural links, it is not surprising that an enterprising Scot has finally come up with the idea of a Swiss tartan.

It has now become a commercial reality, with Edinburgh based Geoffrey Tailor sponsoring the cost of designing, weaving and officially registering a new Swiss inspired tartan called, not surprisingly, Swiss Red.

The cloth is woven at the firm's own five storey tartan weaving mill next to Edinburgh Castle, and is then made into kilts, plaids, trousers, trews and waistcoats.

The cost of making a traditional hand sewn kilt, containing eight yards of specially woven cloth, is around £330, depending on the number of orders received.

The firm can be contacted at www.geoffreykilts.co.uk



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