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The Brits started it. Now could global warming put its future in jeopardy?



It all began with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the creator of Sherlock Holmes when, in 1895, he strapped a pair of thin planks to his boots and slid down a snow covered slope above Davos.

It marked the beginning of winter sports, soon growing numbers of his countrymen were flocking to Swiss mountain villages every winter to enjoy the delights of this exciting

new pastime. And not very long afterwards the rest of the world followed in their tracks.

But could it all be coming to an end? Is the snow covered golden egg that means so much to the Swiss economy about to slowly melt away?

Scientists are now convinced that our planet has already started warming up, and that higher temperatures will make the snow

completely disappear anywhere under 1,500 metres. And that could put at risk many alpine resorts that the enterprising British had first made famous.

Only resorts with much higher slopes like St Moritz, or newer ones like Verbier, where this dramatic picture was taken, will be safe – for the time being.

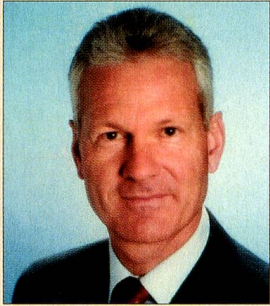
• More on Page Two

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

The Swiss Review web site, updated daily, includes a complete calendar of Swiss club events being held during the year. Club presidents are asked to send all details to: editor@meakin.net

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[2007]

New Consul General here from Russia



He first came to London in 1976 when his employers, Citibank, sent him to its branch in the City to hone his language skills.

Three years later he joined the Swiss Foreign Ministry, and his first overseas posting was to Manchester, where he joined the city's now defunct Consulate General.

Now Eduard Krall (pictured above) is back here to take on his new role as Consul General.

In between he's worked in Buenos Aires, Houston, Athens, Jakarta and Bonn, and his last posting was as Head of Chancery at the Swiss Embassy in Moscow.

The Alpine Club celebrates 150 years

The world's first mountaineering club, founded in 1857 by English climbers who had discovered for themselves the joys and thrills of tackling Alpine peaks, is this year celebrating its 150th anniversary.

And what a celebration it's going to be, centred on Zermatt, once proudly nominated by one of the club's presidents as "the mountaineer's true home."

The main event, to be held at the end of June, was a sell-out almost before it was announced.

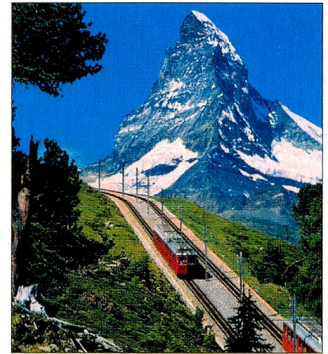
It will start with the unveiling of a commemorative plaque marking a century and a half of friendship

between the club and Zermatt, followed by an official reception.

Next day the 200 plus guests will travel on the Gornergrat railway to the Riffelberg hotel for what the organisers are calling "an unforgettable evening".

Then on the Sunday there will be a special morning service at the English Church, which is known as the parish church of the Alpine Club. Many members have been buried there, or are commemorated on its walls for their exploits.

• *More about the Alpine Club's history in the next Swiss Review.*



The Gornergrat railway with the proud Matterhorn in the background

Holidaymakers still flocking to the Alps

Latest statistics from Swiss holiday resorts show that more and more Britons are now choosing Switzerland for their holidays.

Figures just released show that since 1995 there has been an impressive growth of 51.4 per cent in overnight stays by British guests in Switzerland. In fact some of the most popular destinations showed the number of UK visitors has more than doubled.

Meiringen in the Bernese Oberland, the first resort in the Alps to hold regular Church of England services - in 1851 - saw figures rocket by 320 per cent.

Other major increases were Verbier (240 per cent), Engelberg (205 per cent), Flims (141 per cent), Saas Fee (118 per cent) and Zermatt (107 per cent).

Of these Flims, lying at just 1000m, has the most to fear from global warming - but, like similar resorts, compensates for lack of snow by its appeal to summer hikers.

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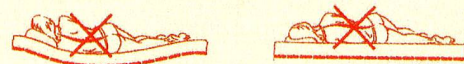
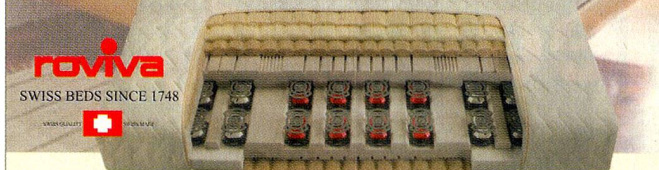


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Pestalozzi Village plans massive re-development

Nearly 50 years since it was inaugurated on a 170 acre site in East Sussex, the famous Swiss-inspired Pestalozzi International Village faces a giant regeneration programme to make it more suited to furthering its humanitarian work in the 21st century.

The village is a living testimony to the unique work of Swiss born Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi who, two centuries ago, devoted his life to give poor and underprivileged children from around Europe the chance to have a decent education.

Interest in Pestalozzi's vision was rekindled in 1946, immediately after the war, when a group of Swiss philanthropists established the first Pestalozzi Children's Village at Trogen in the rolling pasturelands of Appenzell.

Its aim was to care for orphans and refugee children displaced during the war, and it soon achieved international recognition.

In 1959 an identical village was built in Sedlescombe in Sussex, initially for 40 child victims of war torn Europe. Today its focus is on helping disadvantaged young people between the ages of 16 and 19 from some of the poorest areas in the world.

Recently the village was visited by the Swiss Ambassador, Alexis Lautenberg, and his wife Gabrielle.

Said the Ambassador: "I am utterly impressed by the strong commitment of the whole team. The development is a really colossal undertaking."

Derek Marshall, the village's chief executive, said: "This regeneration project is critical to a long term and self sustaining future.

"The redevelopment will

enable Pestalozzi International to fulfil its commitment to double its student numbers and spread its international impact.

"Our vision is to establish, over time, a profile locally, regionally, nationally and internationally as an academically well-founded education centre of excellence for environmental and international development issues.

"The fact that major organisations, like WWF, RSPB and the Wildlife Trusts have

recently expressed a strong interest in forging partnerships as a result of this redevelopment shows that we are already on the right track."

• *The next issue of the Swiss Review will take a more detailed look at the history of the Pestalozzi movement and of the work being undertaken in the UK.*

Meanwhile, to find out more about the redevelopment scheme contact campaign director Glen Fendley on 01424 870 444 or email: glen.fendley@pestalozzi.org.uk



Alexis Lautenberg, the Swiss Ambassador to the UK, carefully planting a black poplar tree in the grounds of the village, watched by the CEO, Derek Marshall



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: 30 Manor Road, Bramhall SK7 3LY. Tel: 0161 296 0619.

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.

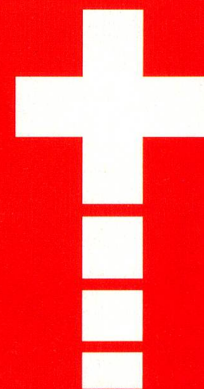
• The 'Switzerland in the UK' supplement appears four times a year. The deadline for the next issue containing UK news, to be distributed in June, is April 16.

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The day the cows ...to the sound of

'Hello, I gather you play the alphorn?' (This is Kevin Dawson, producer for Home Truths on BBC Radio 4.) 'Can we come and talk to you about your instrument and maybe record you playing?'

I didn't stop to think for long. Well, who could refuse?

I suggested that it might be best to meet in a field somewhere, with some cows. He might enjoy seeing, and explaining to listeners, what happens.

Kevin sounded slightly bemused. 'Fine', he said. He was sure that the presenter, David Stafford, would be delighted. What about Tuesday 14th?

I'd discovered the effect of the alphorn on cows quite by chance.

A little while ago I'd had a performance to prepare and was

FRANCES JONES, the UK's first professional alphorn player, tells how she acted as a Pied Piper to a herd of cattle for BBC Radio's Home Truths – with some rather unexpected results

unfortunately staying for a week in a flat in Devon.

So rather than excite the wrath of lots of neighbours with my daily practice, on the first morning I went out to a quiet bit of the South Devon coast path, found an even more secluded 'permitted footpath' that ran along the back of an empty grassy field, and started to play.

After a few minutes I noticed a herd of cows in the far distance, that hadn't been there before. Then I noticed that they seemed

to be coming towards me.

As I continued to play I realised that they were definitely coming towards me. About 50 Friesians.

As I kept playing, they drew closer and closer and before long I was completely surrounded by cows. They seemed transfixed.

Then I remembered.

Of course, the alphorn in Switzerland was used to call the cows. Here they were. It was quite surreal, but it seemed somehow natural too.

This felt like a very appropriate scenario for the Home Truths team to witness. I made arrangements with John Barker, who keeps a herd of rare White Park cattle near where I live, and wrote to Kevin with directions.

I had the following email back:

'I have spoken to David Stafford (the programme's presenter) and he informs me that it has been an ambition of his to play the alphorn for a very very long time. It appears that he is a very very happy man due to the prospect of meeting you and the instrument.'

Tuesday the 14th dawned bitterly cold and raining hard. I rang Kevin and suggested rearranging. Not possible, he said. David was a very busy man. In fact, as we arrived the rain cleared. So out we climbed, out came the microphones and recording equipment. I was introduced to David Stafford and the conversation began.

He asked why I'd chosen to play the alphorn and how long I'd been playing. He wanted me to explain the original functions of the instrument, and why I'd brought him to this field.

He then asked me to get the alphorn out of its case, and as it emerged he suddenly interrupted his calm, measured commentary with 'Ooh! Isn't it pretty!'

He described its size, its beauty and the flowers and Swiss flag decorating the bell. Then he invited me to start playing.

The cattle were engrossed in grazing away in the far distance. The moment the first sound came from the alphorn, though, heads looked up.

As I continued to play, the cows started coming towards us – slowly at first, then running to where the sound was coming from.

David was ecstatic: 'This is absolute magic,' he said. 'It's like – like witchcraft over cows!'

It couldn't have been better. His sheer amazement and excitement as he described the scene to the microphone was wonderful to hear!

The cows came right up to us and very soon we were totally surrounded by an attentive herd of about 60 handsome White Park cattle.

They were utterly mesmerised by the sound of the beautiful Swiss melodies. David was almost speechless with wonder.

We had cows snuffling all around us, mooing a bit, sticking their noses into the recording

See for yourself the entire video of Frances' amazing encounter with the cows by going to:
www.swissreview.co.uk/video/alphorn



BBC presenter David Stafford just cannot believe it as the cows coming running to listen to the 14 foot long alphorn

came alive

f moo-sic



As the recording gets under way one very inquisitive cow moves closer to inspect the source of the music

equipment, my alphorn case, and even into the bell of the horn itself.

After further conversation, exploring opportunities for playing and describing the alphorn repertoire, I played a little more for the cows and then we slowly packed up and withdrew, under the lingering gaze of around 60 pairs of doleful brown eyes.

In his closing remarks, David commented that it was one of the most strange and unforgettable interviews he had ever conducted. And I must admit that although I have played to cows now on a number of occasions, this was indeed a memorable day for me too.

I can't begin to imagine what it all meant to the cows!

A recording of the full BBC Radio 4 'Home Truths' broadcast can be heard on Frances's website, www.AmazingAlphorn.com, with photographs and video footage of the occasion. If you're looking for an alphorn player, Frances can be contacted through her website, or ring 0118 926 8598.



Frances Jones with the man who introduced her to the alphorn, Roger Zanetti, at his home in Yverdon-les-Bains, Vaud

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A warm welcome to Scotland for the FOSSUK weekend



The red-painted Forth Bridge, the biggest 'listed building' in Scotland

Members of Swiss societies in Scotland are determined to lay down the tartan carpet when they welcome their fellow Swiss from south of the border for this summer's FOSSUK weekend.

Swiss Club Edinburgh has had major responsibility for drawing up the official programme, which will take place over two days in the Scottish capital – Saturday and Sunday, June 2 and 3.

However, the get together will really start on the Friday evening with an informal evening at the Caledonian Hilton Hotel, arranged by the hotel's general manager, who is also Swiss.

Willy Blattner, from Kuttigen in Canton Aargau, has been running this premier Scottish hotel since 2004. His 30 years with Hilton Hotels have taken him to Canada, the USA and Croatia, and for a while he was general manager at the Hilton hotel at Zurich Airport.

FOSSUK's formal programme starts on the Saturday morning, with a choice of visits to the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh Castle, or a bus tour of the city.

The business side of the weekend gets under way on the Saturday afternoon, with the annual general meeting. This will be held at the Holliday Inn, adjacent to Edinburgh Zoo.

It will be followed by the official reception and dinner, which will take place in the two century old Mansion House – not The Members' House, which it is called in the official invitation sent to clubs by FOSSUK.

The Mansion House is in the grounds of the zoo and from which there is a panoramic view of the city and the Pentland Hills.

Sunday, June 3, will be a very busy day for delegates. Coaches will first take them to South Queensferry, where they will be able to admire the 120 year old Forth Railway Bridge, 2.5km long and the world's first major steel bridge.

Next, a visit to the historic House of the Binns, ancestral home of the former Father of the House of Commons, Tam Dalyell, who was guest of honour when FOSSUK last visited Edinburgh in 1995.

Finally, they will be taken by boat to the unique, £17.5 million Falkirk wheel, the world's first (and only) rotating boat wheel, which transfers vessels from the Union Canal to the Forth and Clyde Canal, 24 metres below.

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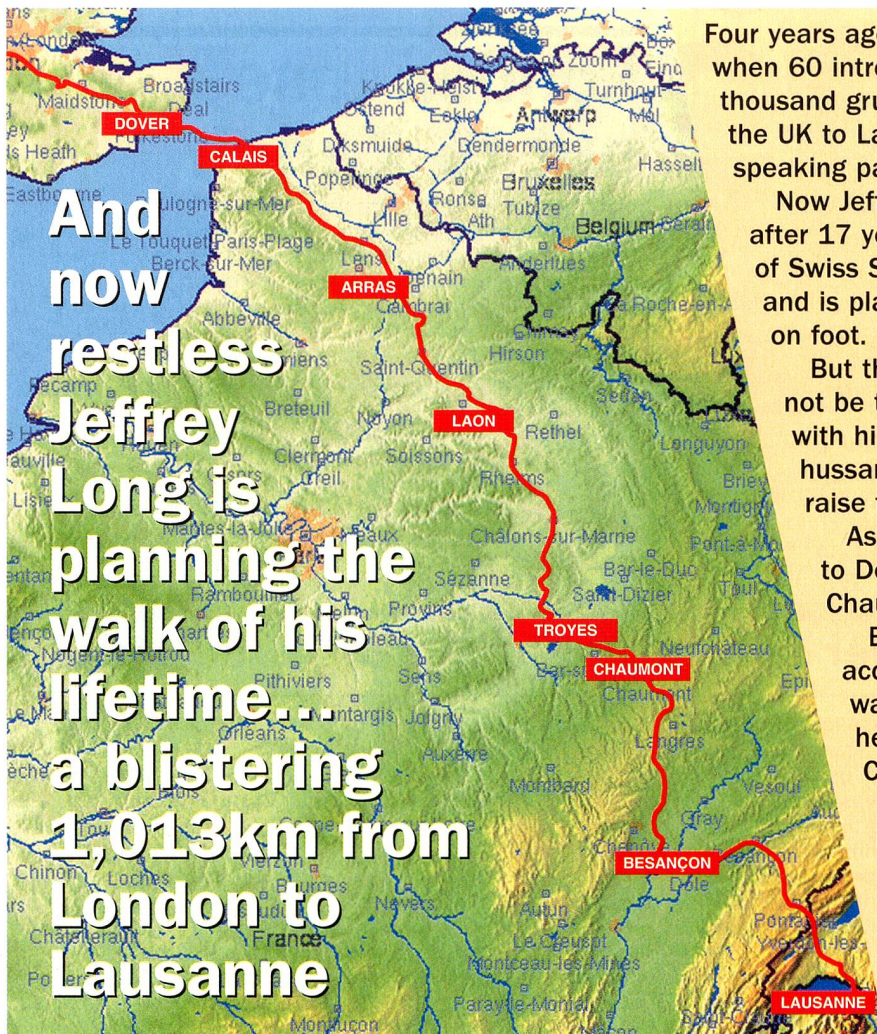
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And now restless Jeffrey Long is planning the walk of his lifetime... a blistering 1,013km from London to Lausanne

Four years ago he initiated a unique cycle ride when 60 intrepid volunteers rode more than a thousand gruelling kilometres from the capital of the UK to Lausanne, the capital of the French speaking part of Switzerland.

Now Jeffrey Long, who stood down last year after 17 years as President of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK, has itchy feet and is planning to go the whole trip himself – on foot.

But this 75-year-old ex paratrooper will not be travelling alone. He's hoping to take with him a 33 year old former British Army hussar who, like Jeffrey, will be doing it to raise funds for charity.

As before, the route will go from London to Dover, Calais, Arras, Laone, Troyes, Chaumont and Besançon to Lausanne.

But Jeffrey, despite all his many accomplishments, cannot yet walk on water. For that 32km part of the route he'll just be pacing the deck of a cross Channel ferry.

There will be more about his plans in the next issue of the Swiss Review. But for further information – especially if you wish to sponsor him – he can be contacted on 01274 588 189 or write to 30 Finsbury Drive, Bradford BD2 1QA.

More Swiss Golf Days planned

Dates have been announced for the forthcoming Swiss Golf Days – which are now in their third year.

The next will be on Monday, May 21 at the lakeside Silvermere golf course near Cobham in Surrey.

Four months later – on Friday, September 14, it will be Trophy Day at Highgate in North London.

At this event the Marchesi Trophy will be awarded to the best Swiss player, the two Volmond trophies for the best lady player and the overall winner, and the Hole in One trophy.

Organiser Jeffrey Long says he hopes that with increased numbers turning up he will be able to form a Swiss Golf Society with the intention of holding events at different courses in the Greater London area.

For further details or an application form, interested golfers are asked to contact Jeffrey direct (details in the story above).

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Swiss Re sells London's Gherkin for £600 million

Only three years after it was opened, London's most distinctive landmark, the 180 metre high Gherkin, has been sold by Swiss Re, its Zurich based owners.

Built on the site of the old Baltic Exchange, badly damaged by an IRA bomb in 1992, it was believed to have cost Swiss Re Sfr 500 million. It has now changed hands for Sfr 1.47 billion (£600 million).

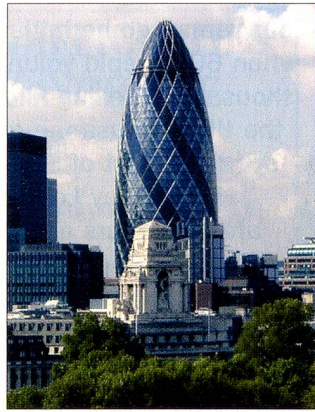
But Swiss Re – the world's largest re-insurer – is not changing its London address.

It will remain the building's largest tenant, occupying 14 of the 41 storeys, and it is estimated it will now be paying its new owners more than £27 million a year in rent.

Designed by architect Norman Foster, the Gherkin won Britain's top prize for architecture in 2004.

Swiss Re first opened its doors in Zurich in 1863. It now has 11,400 employees and 30 offices worldwide.

Its chief executive, Jacques Aigrain, said of the sale of the Gherkin: "We have found a



future owner who will maintain and preserve the superior quality of this outstanding property. We are proud to have built what has become a popular London landmark."

London loses out to Zurich

Giant multinational Kraft Foods, owner of leading Swiss products Toblerone, Suchard and Milka, is closing down its European headquarters in London and Vienna and moving to Zurich.

The decision by the world's second largest food company – second only to Vevey based Nestlé – is welcome news for Zurich. Enough office space for 600 employees has already been hired near Zurich airport and staff are expected to move in later this year.

Jean Tobler opened his first store, the Confiserie Spéciale, in the Länggass quarter in Berne in 1867, and 32 years later built his own chocolate factory.

Jean's son, Theodor, was the genius behind Toblerone. With its special recipe, triangular shape and unmistakable logo, it soon became famous all over the world.

Another gold medal for Herzog & de Meuron

Swiss architects Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron have been awarded one of UK architecture's most prestigious prizes, the gold medal of the Royal Institute of British Architects.

They were presented with the award by the president of the RIBA, Jack Pringle, who said of their achievement:

"Their career has seen them move painlessly from being an experimental studio to a big

practice without the work being diluted in any way.

"They reinvent everything with each new project and do it with such vigour.

"As teachers their influence on the current and future generations of architects is huge."

In recognition of a lifetime's work, the Royal Gold Medal has to be personally approved by the Queen. It was first presented by Queen Victoria in 1848.

It goes each year to a person or group of people whose influence on architecture has had a truly international effect.

The honour recognises the impact Herzog and de Meuron have made both on cities and on architects throughout the world.

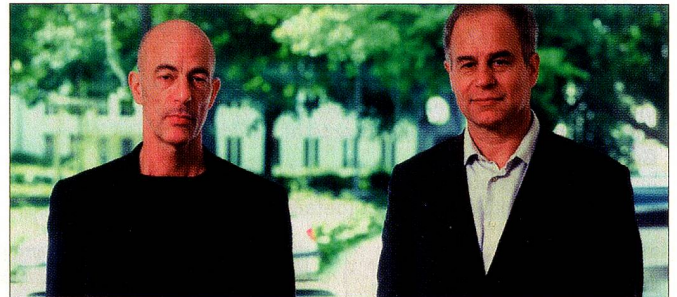
Their careers started with early inspirational work in Switzerland, and flourished with outstanding

London projects like the Tate Modern (2000) and the Laban dance centre (2003) – which also won an RIBA award.

The Tate Modern was easily their highest profile project. It involved converting the run down Bankside power station on the south side of the Thames into a futuristic art gallery.

Both Herzog and de Meuron were born in Basle in 1950 and studied architecture at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology. Three years after leaving college they formed a partnership and went on to set up their own practice.

Today they employ nearly 220 architects working on more than 40 projects worldwide, and have branch offices in London, Munich, San Francisco, Barcelona and Beijing.



Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron: 'Inspirational architects'



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Please email Freddie Wyser (President of FOSSUK) at: fwyser@aol.com