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Switzerland in the UK

2/08

Arsenal's Swiss captain, Philippe Senderos, seems overawed by a multitude of Banksy's graffiti Lenins when he was one of the soccer stars attending the Swiss Embassy's launch of Your Game. Geneva-born Senderos came to the UK in 2002 on a £2.5m transfer from Servette.

Critics rave about graffiti art in Swiss Embassy car park

Back in 2001 the then Swiss Ambassador, Bruno Spinner, invited a crowd of street graffiti artists into the Embassy's underground car park to spray whatever they liked on the walls and then have a rave.

The reason: "To engage with the next generation of people and artists who will largely shape and determine the future."

The intention was to whitewash the walls afterwards and remove all traces. But Embassy staff seemed to like what had been done and asked for it to be preserved.

For seven years the daubings had been hidden from the outside world. But now the secret is out, and art critics have been astounded at what they have found.

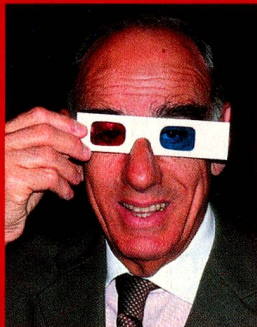
For they estimate the paintings on the wall are worth at least a cool million pounds - and have written a new chapter in the history of art.

Ten of the paintings are by Banksy (his real name is still unknown), who is now Britain's leading graffiti artist. One of his works has just been sold at Sotheby's for a record £636,500.

Raving about the car park collection, The Guardian's art critic, Mark Brown, said: "The most striking is a montage of 21 mohican-haired Lenins with the words "vulture capitalists" stencilled underneath. "It is on the wall next to the car park exit and has suffered a few noticeable bashes - the consequence of tight underground car park corners."

London art collector Christian Fahey said: "The car park is now like the Sistine Chapel of street art." To illustrate the soaring price of works by Banksy he said he had bought one of his prints for £150 two years ago and sold it earlier this year for £7,000.

No one could have been more surprised than the present Swiss



Car park graffiti in 3D: Ambassador Lautenberg tries the red and green glasses to see the colourful paintings

Ambassador, Alexis Lautenberg when he first drove into the car park.

"The Swiss Embassy obviously has many layers," he said. "This seems to be a particularly important and solid one and should be a source of inspiration every time you drive in or out."

And Denis Charrière, Head of Culture at the Embassy, added:

"Using graffiti seems to be a good way to get young people involved. "This project is for them. We want to make connections which increase participation and help young people from all walks of life to realise their potential."

In fact, the secret of the hidden paintings was only revealed when the Embassy opened up the car park for the national launch of the 2008 Your Game scheme. This is a charitable project run by BBC Sport and the Football Foundation to help young people who could be at risk of getting involved in gang culture, gun crime or substance abuse.

Switzerland was invited to become involved in the event because it is co-hosting Euro 08. The opening game will be at the St Jacob Park stadium in Basle on June 7, with Switzerland

playing the Czech Republic.

The Embassy is inviting ten of the Your Game All Stars to Switzerland during the championships, where they will meet interested individuals and organisations involved in different aspects of social inclusion.

Prime Minister Gordon Brown has also lent his support. He said: "This is a fantastic way of showing young people from all backgrounds what they can achieve in life and help them become leaders in their communities. It shows how sport and music can unite people from different areas and cultures."

Blair's bounty



The giant Zurich insurance group has lured Tony Blair to join them as a part-time advisor - with a substantial take-home pay. Read about it on Page 3.

Bells' return



The refurbished Glockenspiel is coming back from Switzerland in time for the £18.5 million facelift of a revitalised Leicester Square. See Page 5.

Jacqui's decision



Home Secretary Jacqui Smith decides Swiss citizens won't have to apply for the new 'foreigners' ID card' out next November. Full story on Page 8.

Switzerland in the UK

The magazine for Swiss living and working in the UK

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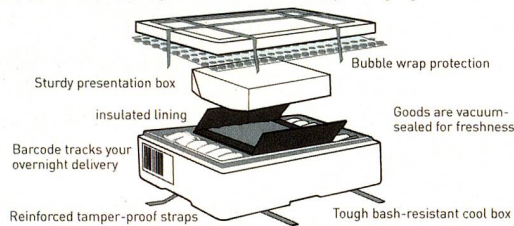
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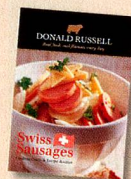
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CH+UK NEWS IN BRIEF

■ **JEFFREY Long** has been telling the full story of his long walk from London to Lausanne - aches and all - to members of the New Helvetic Society at the Swiss Embassy. He revealed that his 1,000km marathon had now raised more than £5,000 for the Royal British Legion. Further requests for the talk should be made to Jeffrey on 01274 588 189.

■ **ALREADY** holder of 46 world records, Dr Janet Folkes from Leicester University has been taking part in this year's Château d'Ox hot air balloon festival as part of training for her forthcoming flight along the Great Wall of China.

■ **SWISS** pianist Nadia Lefert was the first of a number of Swiss and Continental musicians to be invited to give a recital at the West Wales Arts Centre in Fishguard. Davos-born Nadia moved to Wales with her husband, who is chief technology officer at the Office of National Statistics.

■ **PLANS** have not yet been finalised for this year's FOSSUK AGM, to be held in London the weekend of June 14-15. Less formal than in previous years, it will include a reception at the Swiss Embassy and a visit to the London Eye. Further details can be obtained from President Freddie Wyser on 0131 319 1682.

Swiss firm finds a part-time job for Tony Blair

It all began just over a year ago at the World Economic Forum in Davos, that annual get together of the world's political and business elite.

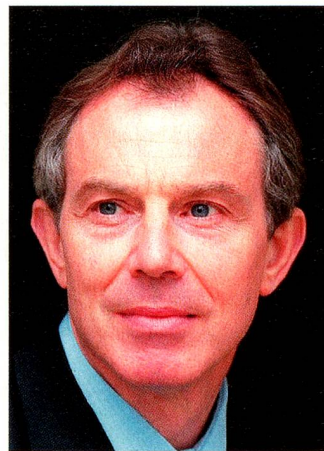
Britain's then prime minister, Tony Blair, was in earnest discussion with German chancellor Angela Merkel and James Schiro, chief executive of Zurich Financial Services, who in six years had turned round the fortunes of the giant multinational which when he joined was fighting for survival.

Schiro talked about a big initiative he was planning - to lead a worldwide fight on climate change. And Blair waxed eloquent about his own support for green issues.

That meeting of minds in the invigorating climate of Davos led to the announcement that Tony Blair was to take a part time job with the company, working closely with its newly formed Climate Change Advisory Council.

Neither side will say how much Tony Blair is being paid, but estimates range from £500,000 a year to a massive £2 million.

But a very upbeat Tony Blair said of his new job: "There is a consensus now that the challenge



Tony Blair: "The challenge of climate change is real"

of climate change is real. What we need now are the policy solutions to turn that concern into action.

"That's why Zurich's work to look at how business, and in particular the insurance sector, can play its part is so crucial, and why I welcome the chance to help them with it."

And James Schiro said "We are excited about the considerable expertise he will bring to Zurich."



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:

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• 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 29.

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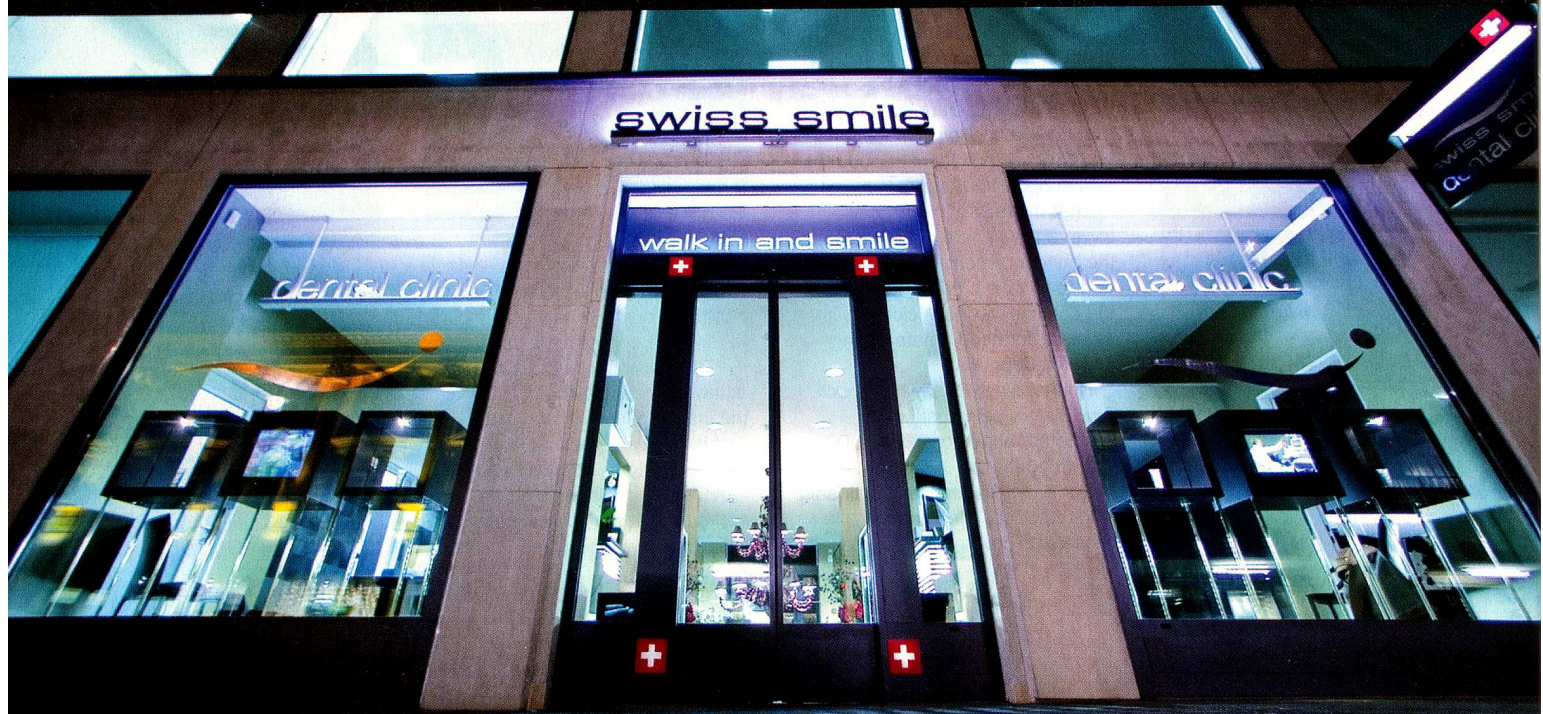
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After two decades, a new Glockenspiel will become part of a £18.5m facelift for London's Leicester Square

Without any doubt it was a brilliant piece of showmanship, the day in 1985 when the Glockenspiel came to Leicester Square.

Londoners love colourful processions, and they were certainly not disappointed. The animated timepiece, made by craftsmen in Switzerland, arrived in style.

Its centrepiece, a 225lb bell, decorated with the coats of arms of the City of Westminster and Switzerland, was borne through the streets on an antique Victorian dray, drawn by the heaviest horses in the country – a pair of two ton giants called Hercules and Golliath.

There were three stops on the way, at Westminster Cathedral, the Methodist Central Hall and Westminster Abbey, where it was blessed by church dignitaries.

The Glockenspiel itself, 35 feet long and ten feet high, was to form an integral part of the newly built Swiss Centre, which towered high above Leicester Square.

It cost Sfr. 1.5 million to make – and was a gift from the people of Switzerland to mark the 400th anniversary of the City of Westminster.

Now Switzerland Tourism has asked the man behind the whole idea, Albert Kunz, then its London director and also director of Swiss Centre Ltd, to come out of retirement to mastermind the re-creation of the Glockenspiel in time for the massive £18.5 million renovation programme for Leicester Square.

The illustration below shows the design in its early stages and depicts how it will fit into the City Council's concept for the square.

Not yet included is the animated procession of herdsmen leading

their cattle up to their alpine pastures, which quickly became a popular tourist attraction for the 50 million visitors a year to this part of London.

The 27 bells themselves have been returned to their birthplace, the Rüttschi Bell Foundry in Aarau, where they are being reconditioned, retuned and restored to their former brilliance – and in some cases completely melted down and recast.

The redesign of the Glockenspiel has been in the hands of Albert Kunz and the late Theo Kernen of Andelfingen, in collaboration with Thomas Wertli, managing director of Alfred Wertli of Winterthur, the general contractors for the construction and installation.

They have ensured that as many features as possible of the original Glockenspiel have been retained.

The style and colour of the cladding of the arch carrying the bells, as well as the night-time illumination, is being designed jointly by Switzerland Tourism and Westminster Council planners.

But the basic construction is dictated by the fact that the Glockenspiel is a finely tuned musical instrument and if the arch is not built to a precise shape it could adversely affect the melodious sound of the bells.

Such attention to detail has also been a feature of the lengthy work that has already gone into the grand design for the expensive facelift of the whole of Leicester Square.

Some of the best architects and landscapers have been engaged in this mammoth task, and their ideas have been subjected to intense public scrutiny, with Londoners



The then Lord Mayor of the City of Westminster, Councillor Roger Bramble, welcoming the new addition to the vibrancy of Leicester Square in September, 1985.

generally being encouraged to give their views on the development of what is, without any doubt, one of the capital's major tourist hotspots.

An example of their determination to satisfy the needs of the square's 250,000 daily visitors is in the provision of seating – far more than any other square of its size in the country.

It will include a giant, 200m long white granite 'ribbon' seat for the public to enjoy an almost daily programme of musical, theatrical and cultural outdoor events.

The leader of Westminster City Council, Sir Simon Milton, who is a regular visitor to Switzerland, has given his enthusiastic backing to the project.

"Leicester Square has been the home of popular entertainment for more than two centuries," he said.

"These plans will ensure it will continue to enthral the millions of visitors who visit it every year for generations to come.

"This is very much an area for the people, and we want visitors to be able to relax and enjoy the sights and the array of dining and entertainment on offer." And he

added that the first part of the plan had already been implemented – transforming Leicester Square from what had been "a squalid and intimidating place", closing late-night clubs and introducing 24 hour policing, and making it "somewhere where there is now hope for the future."

Some facts about Leicester Square as it is today

- It is one of the busiest, liveliest public places in the world – 24 hours a day.
- It has more than 1,000 all fresco dining seats, offering a variety of culinary styles.
- As the home of UK Cinema, it plays host to more than 50 premieres a year.
- It has the only half price theatre ticket booth in London.
- It is the only pedestrianised square of its type in London to have green space at the centre, surrounded by a variety of different forms of entertainment.



An artist's impression of the new approach to Leicester Square showing the Glockenspiel and the cantonal tree. Not yet incorporated in this design is the colourful procession of leading their cattle up into the high Alps.



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ID cards for foreigners - but Swiss are exempt

Swiss citizens living in the UK will not be affected by the latest Government decision to introduce ID cards for foreigners in November.

The new restrictions will only apply to citizens of ten Eastern European countries coming here to find work.

The announcement by home secretary Jacqui Smith made clear that Swiss nationals will continue to have the right to live and work in the UK, providing they are able to support themselves and their families without the help of public funds.

However, if you have family members coming to live with you who are not Swiss citizens, they will have to apply for a "family permit" – similar to a visa.

Swiss citizens can take a job here, set up a business, manage a company, or set up a local branch of a company. And the law says they cannot face discrimination in the workplace because of their nationality in terms of conditions of employment, pay or working conditions.

• To see the full report on the rights and responsibilities of Swiss citizens in the UK in full, go to: www.swissreview.co.uk/documents/immigration/

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New advanced search options have been incorporated into Swiss Railways' timetable panel on the home page of the Swiss Review web site.

This started life as a simple aid to finding the times of trains between two stations. Then it was extended to bring in other forms of transport like lake steamers and buses, to show the fare, and tell you which trains are best suited to cyclists.

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