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REGIONAL EDITION

UNITED KINGDOM & IRELAND

Editorial

In this issue we talk politics. Have you heard of the Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA)? The CSA comprises 140 delegates living in countries all over the world and within Switzerland. Together with the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA), the CSA represents the interests of the expat community. It is known in the media as the 'Parliament of the Fifth Switzerland'. The next election for the CSA will be held in early 2017. It is time to start thinking whether you would like to put yourself forward as a possible candidate to represent the expat community in the UK. To help you make your decision, Franz Muheim, who lives in Edinburgh

and was one of four UK delegates elected back in 2013, describes what the job entails.

■ *How do we buck the trend of youth absenteeism at the polls? This is a question asked by communities all over the world. Well now young Swiss expats have taken the initiative. Fed up with feeling detached from the Swiss political process, a group of global pioneers has set up their own Youth Parliament. Finally, staying on the political theme, there is news about a forthcoming discussion in London exploring ways in which young Swiss adults can become more engaged in Swiss politics.*



ANDREW LITTLEJOHN,
«UK & IRELAND PAGES»

Politics: Young Swiss Abroad find their Voice

Are you between the age of 15 and 35 and currently living abroad? Or have you lived abroad for 10 years? Then why not get involved with Switzerland's Youth Parliament? The purpose of the Youth Parliament for the Swiss Abroad (YPSA) is to create a community where all young Swiss living in a foreign country have the possibility to exchange information and share experiences and opinions.

Through social media, such as Facebook, Skype and Instagram, we want to use this platform to encourage debate. We hope this will lead to an increased awareness of, and thus participation in, the Swiss political system.

We have already had a very encouraging first twelve months. The creation of YPSA was announced in August last year during the 93rd Congress of the Swiss Abroad



For more information check us out on Facebook or email us:

Facebook group:

www.facebook.com/groups/YouthParliamentSwissAbroad

Email address:

youthparliamentswissabroad@gmail.com

in Geneva, in front of the Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard. Earlier this year, at a meeting in Brunnen (Canton Schwyz), we were officially recognised by OSA (Organisation of the Swiss Abroad) as a fully-fledged organisation. As YPSA's president, I was elected onto the council as its youth representative. This election has been fundamental in making the voice of young people heard at all levels and can potentially bring new ideas and a different perspective to debates.

Our next meeting will take place in Bern at the beginning of August during the 100th anniversary celebrations of OSA. We have organised some fun activities and there will be lots of partying with fellow expats from every corner of the globe. Come and join in the fun!

DAVIDE WÜTHRICH, PRESIDENT OF YPSA

Forum: Engaging our Youth in Swiss Politics

The Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK (FOSSUK) would like to invite you to our forthcoming Forum this autumn: Engaging young adults in the Swiss political process.

We are delighted that Mrs. Anja Wyden Guelpa, Chancelière d'Etat du Canton de Genève, has agreed to participate as our prin-

ciple guest. Youth absenteeism at the polls has worried Mrs Wyden Guelpa for many years.

The second confirmed guest is Davide Wüthrich, the recently appointed President of the Parliament for Young Swiss Abroad (YPSA). Davide is a great advocate of a 'for young people, by young people' approach.

The Event will take place in the Naim Dangoor Auditorium at 1 Wimpole Street, London on 3rd November 2016 between 6.30pm and 8.30pm.

For more details please go to the FOSSUK website:

www.swiss-societies.co.uk



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Are you interested in becoming a CSA delegate? Please feel free to contact me at f.muheim@fed.ac.uk

The next election for the CSA will be held in early 2017. More information about how to become a delegate will be available on the Fossuk website and in the pages of the Swiss Review.



Politics: Being a UK delegate for the Swiss Abroad

Have you heard of the Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA)? The CSA comprises 140 delegates living in countries all over the world and within Switzerland. Together with the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA), the CSA represents the interests of the expat community towards the Swiss authorities, its institutions and public opinion. The CSA is known in the media as the ‘Parliament of the Fifth Switzerland’. Franz Muheim, who lives in Edinburgh, is one of four UK delegates. He reports what it entails to be a delegate to the CSA.

Being interested in Swiss politics and making several trips to Switzerland each year, either for my work – I am writing this on a plane to Switzerland – or for visiting relatives, it felt natural to answer a call for candidates to become one of four UK delegates representing the Swiss Abroad. This was back in 2013 and I was subsequently elected for four years.

As a CSA delegate I attend meetings in Switzerland twice a year, usually in Bern in the spring and at the annual Congress of the Swiss Abroad in the summer. Since the UK delegates were elected, the CSA and OSA have succeeded in getting several topics that are of particular interest to Swiss expats into the mainstream of Swiss media and politics.

These have included the fact that Swiss banks are closing the bank accounts of Swiss living abroad. OSA and CSA have undertaken several interventions, either with banks directly, or by convincing Swiss national and state councillors to make submissions to the Swiss parliament in order to find a solution to this problem, which has affected a considerable number of Swiss citizens abroad.

The CSA has also called on the government to ensure that Switzerland is not cut off from education and research cooperation with European Union countries. Unfortunately, education and research are in considerable difficulty in Switzerland due to the backlash after the 50.3% yes-majority on the vote of the Mass Immigration Initiative on 9th February 2014.

Whenever there is a hot topic, journalists will be in attendance and CSA meetings now regularly get reported in the Swiss evening news. My comment, ‘Do we want to play in the Premier League, or don’t we?’ was picked up by Swiss news agencies when I voiced my concerns about Switzerland’s education standards being affected by the immigration vote. It still worries me that Swiss researchers and students could miss out on EU funding initiatives, like Erasmus and Horizon 20/20. In my opinion, these European programmes are a ‘must have’ for Switzerland to sustain its excellent reputation in education and research.

The meetings in Switzerland are only part of our work. The delegates also sit on the committee of the Federation of the Swiss Societies UK (Fossuk). In 2014, we helped organise the very successful forum, ‘Further Education in the UK or in Switzerland’, which saw more than 100 expats, young and old, engaging with education specialists from Switzerland. The following year’s topic ‘Retirement Planning’ was equally successful. We are currently planning a forum on getting the young Swiss Abroad interested in Swiss politics and would also like to run these events in other regions of the UK.

FRANZ MUHEIM

UK delegates; Alexandre Tissot, Margrit Lyster, Franz Muheim and Thomas Rast at the recent meeting of the Council of the Swiss Abroad in Brunnen



Feature: 100 years New Helvetic Society

The New Helvetic Society (NSH) celebrates its centenary this year. Our council has selected the elegant One Whitehall Place on Victoria Embankment to mark this important event. Distinguished guests from Switzerland and the UK will be joining us for a sumptuous dinner, followed by music and dancing.

The London Group of the NSH was officially founded on 18 June 1916. Two years prior to this, in May 1914, at a time of divided loyalties, La Société Helvétique was reborn in Geneva as the Nouvelle Société Helvétique. We can thank one of its founder members, Dr Georges Bonnard, who visited London in 1916, for creating London's Nouvelle Société Helvétique. The initial aim of the society was to encourage good relations and understanding between Swiss residents and their British hosts, as at that time many Brits were wary of foreigners and suspected the Swiss of being pro-German. 12 months following that inaugural meeting, the Society had already attracted 266 members, which then swelled to 600 two years after that.

Today, the New Helvetic Society is a thriving Swiss cultural club with about 200 paid-up members. We organise a wide range of events with a Swiss connection. Some of our most successful evenings have been our concerts, both classical and jazz/blues. Thanks to our Vice-President, Mrs Loredana Guetg Wyatt, we have forged strong links with the Orion Orchestra and quite a few of their musicians have performed

for us. More modern music was programmed initially with some trepidation, but has turned out to be a big success. We have featured some great performers, such as Dana Gillespie, Nicolas Meier and Mornington Lockett. All musicians are internationally known and recognised by their peers and professional critics.

Apart from jazz and classical concerts, film shows, visits to museums and social gatherings, we also provide a forum for discussing the relationship between Switzerland and the United Kingdom, or the European Union, on a political, economic and cultural level.

Perhaps the best attended and most amusing event in recent years involved the highly-regarded author Diccon Bewes who, reading from his bestseller 'Swiss Watching', demonstrated that there is more to Switzerland than banks, skis, francs and cheese. Cultural misunderstandings, Swiss inventions, the meaning of money and linguistic calamities: all was revealed, thankfully in a light-hearted manner! The NSH is proud to have introduced Diccon to London's Swiss community.

The major event for 2016 is our special centenary dinner. The Council of the New Helvetic Society is looking forward to welcoming you all at One Whitehall Place on the 24th September for a memorable evening of celebrations. Come and meet our members and join us as we raise a glass to our first 100 years of the New Helvetic Society in London.

DANIEL PEDROLETTI, PRESIDENT, NEW HELVETIC SOCIETY

Centenary Celebration

Details and prices will be published on our website and our Facebook page as they become available. If you want us to keep you informed, drop us a line at: info@newhelveticsociety.org.uk

1: South Wales Swiss Society

Italian Swiss harpist Elisa Netzer from Lugano and German Swiss soprano Annina Gieré performed at this year's Mansion House concert in Swansea. The aim of these concerts is to provide a platform for talented young Swiss musicians in both Cardiff and Swansea in South Wales. The concerts, which are now in their eighth year, are organised annually by the Honorary Consul of Switzerland in Cardiff, Ruth Thomas-Lehmann.

Elsa Netzer was put in touch with Annina Gieré, who comes from Zurich and is presently studying at the Wales International Academy of Voice, by Ms Thomas-Lehmann. Together the two artists arranged a most enjoyable and interesting programme of a harp recital in the first half and voice and harp in the second half. The harp recital featured 'Toccare', an item especially written for Elisa's Master's

Annina Gieré (l) with Elisa Netzer (r)



Sarah in London



AGM opens



project while at the Royal Academy of Music in London by contemporary Swiss composer Stephan Hodel, who is now based in London.

2: Swiss Club Taunton & Somerset

We are proud to announce that Club member Sarah Rainford has raised over £2,000 for charity after completing the Paris and London marathons.

Sarah, who only started running last year while working in Guadeloupe to improve her French, ran for the charity Children with Cancer. We had a wonderful day supporting Sarah in London and waving the Swiss flag. It was amusing meeting other Swiss nationals at the London marathon, also proudly waving their Swiss flags!

CAROLINE RAINFORD

3: Manchester Swiss Club

The Committee of the Manchester Swiss Club opens the society's AGM on 18th March.

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SWISS NATIONAL DAY LONDON

An event for and by the Swiss community

Come and celebrate Swiss National Day

Saturday 16 July 2016

UCL, Main Gate, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT
Doors open at 3 pm



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Religion: New Leadership Team for the Swiss Church

Prof. Johannes Reich is the new president of the Consistoire of the Swiss Church in London. He succeeds Ursula Jost who returned to Switzerland in 2013.

This post has been vacant for almost three years, so the Swiss Church congregation was delighted to have found in Johannes a committed and experienced person willing to lead the church through times of change. Johannes, who is an Assistant Professor of Law at University of Zurich, grew up in a Minister's house in the Canton of Zurich and is familiar with the structures of the Reformed Church and with the challenges that churches face.

Johannes is part of a new leadership team at the Swiss Church. Andrea Vedolin, Assistant Professor at the London School of Economics, is the new company secretary. David Hume, who formerly worked in the City and now runs our Tuesday evening dance classes, is the new Vice-President.

REV CARLA MAURER

For more information on the Swiss Church visit www.swisschurchlondon.org.uk



Feature: Edinburgh pipe band on trip of a lifetime

They have shared the limelight with the bagpipe rock band The Red Hot Chilli Pipers at the Edinburgh International Festival. They have displayed their talent at the Hogmanay Celebration on New Year's Eve at the renowned Usher Hall in Edinburgh, and led the parade at Edinburgh's official certification as a Fair Trade City, but in April this year a couple of dozen young pipers and drummers from Edinburgh's Davidson's Mains & District Pipe Band went on the trip of a lifetime. The 26 boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 16 had been invited by the Guild of the Three Kings to perform at the prestigious children's spring parade 'Sechseläuten' in Zurich.

This youthful pipe band marched proudly alongside a dozen young Swiss from Zurich's Freudenberg Kantonsschule, both in their nation's traditional costumes, with the Scottish youngsters playing a specially arranged bagpipe version of the traditional Sechseläuten March to mark the occasion – a world première for this great festival of the Guilds!

Many of the Guild members admire Scottish customs and were delighted with the initiative. As the Guild's representative Walter Isler said, 'Hospitality does not have to end at national borders. It was our intention to provide a unique experience through friendship and cultural links.'

The participation of the young musicians from Edinburgh was made possible thanks to an initiative by the Honorary Consul General of Switzerland in Edinburgh, Peter Müller-McDougall, himself an enthusiastic piper, and the generous support of the Ambassador of Switzerland, HE Dr Dominik Furgler and his wife, Hayam Furgler – Chairperson of the Swiss Cultural Fund UK – and members of The Guild of the Three Kings in Zurich.



Military: The thrill of Swiss aerobatics

The Patrouille Suisse (the Swiss equivalent of the Red Arrows) returns to the Royal International Air Tattoo at Fairford in Gloucestershire this summer with high-speed precision flight displays in six F-5 Tiger jets on 9 and 10 July.

For more information & tickets: www.airtattoo.com

The PC-7 aerobatics team in their nine distinctively painted red and white Pilatus PC-7 turbo trainer aeroplanes showcase their skills at Scotland's National Airshow at the East Fortune Airfield in East Lothian on 23 July.

For more information & tickets: www.nms.ac.uk

And from 18 to 21 August spectators at the Bournemouth Air Festival get a treat with a display of the versatility and range of the Swiss Super Puma helicopter Display Team.

For more information & tickets: www.bournemouthair.co.uk



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Information for Swiss nationals resident in IRELAND and NORTHERN IRELAND

The Regional Consular Centre in London (RCC) wishes to inform you that a staff member will visit Dublin (Swiss Embassy) with the mobile biometric station on the following dates:

10 to 14 October 2016

Since the introduction of the biometric passport it has been necessary for applicants to attend in person. The mobile biometric passport station permits biometric data to be recorded for the issuing of identity documents (passports and/or identity cards) in the Swiss Embassy in **Dublin**.

If you would like to take advantage of this opportunity, **please contact the RCC** to book an appointment, tel. +44 (0)20 7616 6000 (option 2), or rcclondon@eda.admin.ch

West Cork Chamber Music Festival
Where: **Bantry, County Cork**
When: **1 July – 9 July 2016**
www.westcorkmusic.ie/chambermusicfestival

Music: Swiss pianist to perform in County Cork

One of Europe's leading chamber music festivals, the West Cork Chamber Music Festival, looks forward to welcoming award-winning Swiss pianist Cédric Pescia to perform at this year's event.

Cédric was born in Lausanne and studied there with Christian Favre. Later he moved to Geneva to continue his studies with Dominique Merlet and then to Berlin to work with Klaus Hellwig. In 2002 he won one of the most prestigious competitions, the Gina Bachauer International Artists Piano Competition in Salt Lake City.

This year the West Cork Chamber Music Festival celebrates its 21st anniversary. Some of Europe's top chamber musicians from Hungary, Denmark and Finland will be travelling to south-west Ireland for this special anniversary event. A week of concerts is planned from morning to late night in two intimate and historic venues in Bantry. Bantry House hosts the evening concerts, while the daytime recitals are held in the 19th century St. Brendan's Church in the town square.

Swiss pianist
Cédric Pescia



Clan of Celts

Music: From Classical to Clan Rock

Silvia Crastan was trained as a classical violinist in Switzerland and at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London. She used to perform mainly as a recitalist (Duo Crastan) with her sister Eva. However, after having worked through most of the classical violin repertory, Silvia felt she needed to find something different, but she was not sure what she was searching for exactly...

My favourite genre besides classical music is rock. I always loved those eccentric British rock/pop figures with long hair and fancy dress(es)! They had an almost extra-terrestrial quality to me. But it is not easy to fit in to this genre as a violinist. It is guitars and vocals that play the riffs and lead parts! So I needed to find a band with some traditional/folk/punk elements where I could smoothly add the acoustic violin sound to it.

So in the meantime, I learnt some electric guitar basics to familiarise myself with guitar riffs and chords and played keyboard in an R&B band to analyse rock/pop structure and harmonies. I did not find anything for the violin for about a year. Then suddenly I received a message on Facebook from Grant Wildy, the ex-drummer of Creeds Cross, a band I had already auditioned for, telling me a new band, Clan of Celts, was being formed and they wanted me to play violin. I was over the moon! I immediately started working with the guitarist Denis Dowling on the violin parts for the 5 original Celtic rock songs for the album, which is planned for release at the end of 2016.

We were soon on our way to a music studio in Oxford to record our first song, 'Please Don't Send me Home'. We shot the video to the single in a very fitting, old, traditional pub in London; The Golden Lion, in Camden. That was really, really fun! Our second track, 'Beggars, Celts and Madmen' is due out soon. Please check out our website for more information and release dates: clanofcelts.com

Go to YouTube to watch our latest video. Our first single, 'Please Don't Send me Home' can be downloaded on iTunes.

Embassy: Becoming a new HonCon

Hans Scheiwiller became the Honorary Consul for Switzerland in Manchester in November. He took over from Arthur Broadhurst, Manchester's first Honorary Consul following the closure of the full professional Consulate in 2006. Here Hans shares with readers the process of how he became a member of the Swiss Honorary Consul team.

Arthur Broadhurst first mentioned to me in Spring 2014 that he was looking to hand over the baton and suggested that I might be a worthy successor. Arthur did a fantastic job, effectively stepping into the place previously filled by 6 full-time consular staff. He is held in great affection by the Swiss community and will be a hard act to follow.

The appointment process takes time. It is not a matter of applying for an advertised job. It is often said (and not entirely without truth!) that the process is so slow that the first thing a new Consul must do is start looking to recruit his successor! Having been encouraged by Arthur, I duly submitted my application which was followed by an interview at the Embassy in London. My appointment was signed by the President of the Confederation in March 2015. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office then issued its 'Exequatur' 3 months later, formally recognising my appointment. However, for administrative reasons, this only went live in November 2015.



Hans Scheiwiller

There is no formal training for the job, although Arthur has been a great mentor. However, I was fortunate that my appointment coincided with the Conference of the Swiss Honorary Representatives (there are 204 Honorary Consuls worldwide), which is held every four years.

I learnt that the mandate is very broad, described by one presenter as the 'Mititia'. There were Consuls from tourist destinations who talked about helping out 'over-exuberant'

travellers, or people visiting sporting events. Then there were other Consuls from unstable countries who talked about civil war, revolution and ultimately about the possibility of having to evacuate the local Swiss population. I sincerely hope that my role in Manchester does not involve this third category!

So far, I have enjoyed engaging with the Swiss community again. There is also a very active Consular group in Manchester, The Manchester Consular Association, which comprises of a mixture of Honorary Consuls and career diplomats. It is always interesting to compare notes and seek the views of my colleagues from other nations.

So, in conclusion, I would like to thank the Swiss government and the Swiss community for placing their trust in me in this position. It is indeed an honour to be the Honorary Consul and I look forward to serving you for many years to come.



Feature: Charlie Chaplin comes Home

Film icon Charlie Chaplin has finally been returned to Leicester Square. The refurbished bronze statue was unveiled in April to coincide with Chaplin's birthday, as well as the opening of a new museum to Chaplin at 'Manoir de Ban' in the Lake Geneva region of Switzerland, where he spent the last 25 years of his life.

Famous for his character, 'The Tramp', Charlie Chaplin was an iconic figure of the silent film era and one of cinema's superstars.

The bronze statue was originally produced by sculptor John Doubleday and installed in Leicester Square in 1981, with a copy of the UK statue being

installed in Vevey the following year. It had been removed down a side street to Leicester Place in 2010 in advance of a mammoth, multi-million regeneration project in the area.

This revival has been long-awaited, so it seemed only fitting to invite John Doubleday to supervise the repair of the statue before bringing it back to its rightful place.

'It gives me great pleasure to see Charlie back in Leicester Square,' the artist said at the unveiling, 'This sculpture is more than a mere cheeky intrusion into the theatrical world – it is a reminder of our history.'

ANDREW LITTLEJOHN

IMPRESSUM

HOW TO CONTACT THE EDITOR: Reports of Swiss society activities, news, coming events, correspondence, articles and advertising for the 'Switzerland in the UK & Ireland' section of the Swiss Review, should go to the editor:

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