

**Zeitschrift:** Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad  
**Herausgeber:** Organisation of the Swiss Abroad  
**Band:** 24 (1997)  
**Heft:** 3

**Anhang:** Switzerland in the UK

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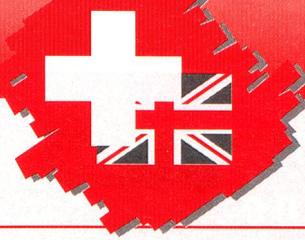
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# Switzerland in the UK

One of the very first decisions taken by Robin Cook MP on the day he became Britain's new Foreign Secretary was to try and bring an end to the continuing controversy about Nazi gold – a subject which in the last few months in particular has done considerable damage to Switzerland and the country's banking system.

Mr Cook announced that Britain would host an international conference later this year to which all countries still laying claim to undistributed gold, as well as Switzerland and other countries that had received gold from Germany, would be invited.

The Swiss Government

## 'Nazi loot': Full story begins to unfold

immediately welcomed the Foreign Secretary's statement, and agreed to attend the conference.

Mr Cook said there had rightly been deep international concern about the fate of the gold looted by the Nazis, adding: "One of the responsibilities of those living now is to ensure that the truth is known about that dark period in Europe's past."

At the same time the For-

ign Office issued a second historical note (*see Swiss Review, 5/1996*) giving the results of intensive investigations into files and records in order to help uncover the full story of what had happened to the gold.

It reveals that most of the gold found in Germany after the war or paid back by the Swiss had already been distributed to claimant governments. But more than five tonnes were still lying in vaults at the Bank of England, and more at the Federal Reserve Bank in New York. Some of it is believed to have been

melted down from gold fillings of Jewish death camp victims.

In contrast to the Foreign Office's restrained approach to this emotive story, investigative journalist Tom Bower has just published a highly charged book\* accusing Swiss banks and the Swiss Government of playing "a despicable role" in exploiting the war and the Holocaust to their financial advantage, and saying their crimes were now beginning to catch up on them.

\* *Blood Money: The Swiss, the Nazis and the Looted Billions* (Macmillan £16.99)

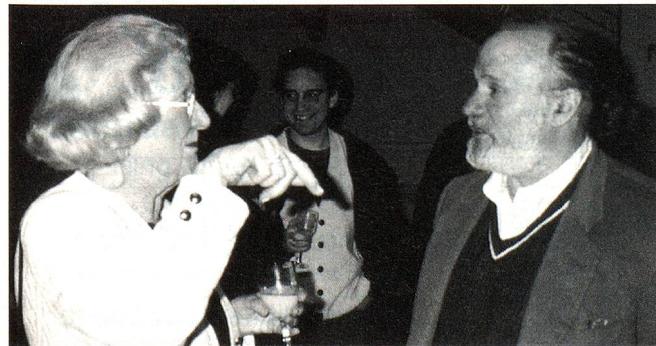
## Tonhalle's UK tour

Members of Manchester Swiss Club descended en masse to the city's Bridgewater Hall in April to support a long awaited visit by the Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra. And they were not disappointed.

The programme, with works by Beethoven and Schubert, was greeted with rapturous applause and prompted the music critic of the Manchester Evening News to enthuse: "These players may be from Zurich, but there was nothing gnomic about their musical utterance, which was full, uninhibited, and communicated enjoyment.

"Indeed, in the Brahms Hungarian Dance, which formed the first encore, there was a gipsy-style fire which I would not have thought of as an obvious quality from upright Swiss citizens."

The Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra gave four other concerts during their tour – in London, Birmingham, Northampton and Dublin.



President of Manchester Swiss Club, Odette Scheiwiller, having a back-stage meeting with the conductor of the Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra, David Zinman

## History of Ticinese cafés

The former headquarters of Ticinese immigrant Carlo Gatti's ice importing business – now the London Canal Museum – saw the unveiling in April of a fascinating history of how he and his compatriots launched a whole network of café-restaurants in Britain between 1847 and 1987.

The book by Peter Barber and Peter Jacomelli – *Continental Taste* – will be reviewed in our next issue.

The principal host was the Camden History Society, and proceedings were chaired by its president, Professor Christopher Elrington, one of the most eminent historians in this country.

The Swiss Ambassador, M. François Nordmann, the Mayors of Islington and Camden, and the Lord Mayor of Westminster – in the same robes worn by one

of his predecessors, Sir John Gatti – all testified to their Ticinese connections.

Several visitors had come from the Ticino, including the deputy head of the Ticino Tourist Office, publisher of the Italian language version of the book. There was Ticinese food and wine, and thanks were expressed to all those contributing, not least to the trustees of the London Canal Museum, who had offered the premises free of charge.

But most gratifying was the presence of Ticinese descendants of the Gatti family who had specially travelled from the Ticino, as well as other descendants of Ticinese restaurateurs, the Allegranzas, Veglios, Ferraria de Marias, Jacomelli, Albertolis, Diviania and Brentinis, to mention just a few.

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## Sir John Wraight dies at 80

Sir John (Richard) Wraight, a former British Ambassador to Switzerland and a great friend of the Swiss community in London, has died just before his 81st birthday.

*Mariann Meier writes:*

After extensive university studies and work in the City of London, John Wraight saw wartime service in the field with the Honorable Artillery Company and the Royal Horse Artillery and carried out a number of economic warfare missions.

This was followed by important assignments to Vienna, Prague and Belgrade, working as assistant to the head of UNRRA.

John Wraight joined the

Diplomatic Service in 1947, taking up posts in Athens and Tel Aviv, where he negotiated the first British financial agreement with the new state.

His next moves were to Washington and Cairo – where he helped restore trade links after the Suez campaign – then to Brussels and Milan, where he was Consul-General.

In 1968 he became Ambassador to Switzerland, and during his five years there began his great love of that country.

On returning to London in 1973 he joined Phillips and Drew as international consultant.

He and his wife Marquita (Maggie), whom he had married in 1947, took a more and more lively interest in the Swiss community.

He joined the City Swiss Club, and in 1991 wrote the history of the club – The Swiss in London – for which he was made an honorary member. He also became a committee member.

But John Wraight's outstanding work was *The Swiss and the British*, published by Michael Russell in 1987, a richly illustrated

## How to contact the editor

Reports of Swiss society activities and coming events, and any other correspondence for the 'Switzerland in the UK' section of the Swiss Review, should be sent to the editor, Derek Meakin, at Europa House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP. Tel: 01625 859 759; fax: 01625 859 444; email: [dmeakin@europress.co.uk](mailto:dmeakin@europress.co.uk).

volume of almost 500 pages.

It shows the author's gift of research in depth, and it covers several centuries of British-Swiss relations.

But John will not just be remembered as a distinguished diplomat and celebrated author. It is his many personal qualities, his loyalty and integrity that his innumerable friends will hold dear.

We all extend our deep sympathy to his devoted wife Marquita in her grave loss. May the fact that we shall go on treasuring John's memory, and with it our affection for her, be of some solace.

# Swiss National Day

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## OSA delegates report

The Council of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad met in Berne on March 22 and was attended by five delegates from the UK – Rose Marie Breitenstein, Joe Broggini, Ursula Ditchburn, Margit Lyster and Bernard Simon.

This is their report to FOSSUK:

The meeting opened with a report from the president, Jean Jacques Cevey, in which he highlighted the activities of the executive committee of OSA during the previous six months.

At the invitation of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs discussions had taken place on subjects of particular interest to the Swiss Abroad – the future of the voluntary old age and invalidity insurance (AJV/IV), Swiss schools abroad, and the question of “free movement of persons” which forms part of bilateral negotiations with the EU.

Although it was too early to draw any conclusion Mr Cevey felt that the people in charge of the various departments had taken note of OSA’s point of view on these questions in favour of the Swiss Abroad and would take them into consideration in future deliberations.

**Voluntary AHV/IV:** The

Council was given a detailed report on the latest discussions with the relevant federal department.

Although OSA recognised the necessity for reform to reduce the present deficit and administrative overload, it was totally opposed to the severe restrictions proposed by the department.

These were to only accept membership from Swiss nationals living in countries with no reciprocal social agreement with Switzerland, to restrict membership to six years while residing abroad and having contributed for at least five years to the compulsory AHV/IV – a premium based on last salary obtained in Switzerland.

The council adopted a relevant resolution calling for solidarity and requesting the retention of the legitimate interests of the Swiss Abroad.

OSA will continue intensive lobbying and parliamentary action against implementation of a most restrictive and uncaring proposal, and the UK delegates promise to continue to stay closely in touch with developments in this thorny problem.

**Health/medical Insurance:** The council noted with satisfaction the federal authorities’ amendments. As a result medical insurance

companies can cover members while abroad.

The council is now appealing to insurers to find generous solutions for the Swiss Abroad and for those wishing to emigrate in future.

**Youth exchange:** “Discover Switzerland” is one of the mottos of the Youth Exchange programme for 15-26 year old Swiss and Swiss Abroad, which started in 1990.

Gabi Schibler, head of the Youth service at the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad, appealed to delegates for their support to help raise the popularity of the programme. With their contacts and influence delegates could be of great help to coordinators. Last year nearly 100 Swiss Abroad from 21 countries visited Switzerland.

**Assembly of the Swiss Abroad:** This annual event, together with the next council meeting, will be in Lugano from August 22 to 24. The theme will be “Swiss Culture Abroad”.

We can happily report that the organisation of the exhibition of Swiss Abroad Artists held in conjunction with the Assembly is progressing well. There are 26 artists taking part, including four from the UK.

FOSSUK – the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK is an umbrella organisation comprising 30 societies and clubs. It offers vital structure and support to activities organised by and for the Swiss community in the United Kingdom.

It was founded as the Presidents’ Assembly in 1947 when the heads of the large Swiss societies, Dr Hans Egger and Raoul de Cintra and Walt Meier, decided their mutual objectives could be achieved most successfully by one coordinating body.

Membership steadily increased, and in October 1965 the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK was born.

Essentially, FOSSUK promotes and fosters the common interests of the Swiss community in the UK as well as representing the interests at the official level.

If offers encouragement and advice to Swiss organisations and, when required, helps the

## Vetera

In his report for the annual general meeting of FOSSUK being held at the Swiss Embassy on June 7, President Jeffrey Long announced with regret the retirement of Mariann Meier, Roland Mider, Bernard Simon and Sylvia Sweeney, and said the federation’s thanks went

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# FOSSUK: How it began and what it does today

coordinate their activities.

Evidence of the important role it plays in the cultural, social and educational life of the Swiss community was the Landsgemeinde in Yorkshire in 1991 and 1996, the Battersea Swiss Fair in 1991, and art exhibitions in London and Scotland in 1991 and 1995.

The Federation is also responsible every four years at its AGM for electing, through its member societies, three delegates and three deputies to represent the interests of the UK based Swiss community twice yearly at meetings of the Council of the Organisation

of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) held in Switzerland.

The Council is instrumental in finding solutions to problems affecting the Swiss

the Federal Constitution.

It also vets applications and recommends new societies for affiliation to OSA.

FOSSUK is run by a small committee of volunteers elected every two years from and by member societies and is financed by members' subscriptions and donations.

These funds are used partly to cover the travel expenses of delegates to OSA and administrative expenditure.

They also contribute to the organisation of the annual general meeting, which is held each year in a different part of the country to give the local Swiss community a chance to meet compatriots

from other parts of the UK.

A regular feature of the AGM are talks by officials of OSA and the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs in Switzerland.

FOSSUK also has the responsibility for the production and financing of the 'Switzerland in the UK' section of the Swiss Review.

As the mouthpiece of UK based Swiss organisations at official level and as the instrument that binds them and promotes their mutual aims and initiatives within a structured framework, FOSSUK is an organisation too vital to the interests of the Swiss community not to be a part of.

By Elena Grimaud Ineichen

Abroad, particularly in respect of their political and educational rights.

In turn, FOSSUK keeps member societies informed of issues discussed by OSA. These have included voting by correspondence, monitoring the optional Old Age and Invalidity insurance legislation, recognising foreign qualifications and diplomas, and reform of



all of them for the work they had done for the Swiss community.

He said it was impossible to list the numerous and wide ranging activities of Mariann and Bernard on behalf of Swiss institutions and societies, but he wanted to mention in particular that both were for many years UK delegates to the Council of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad and very active members of the FOSSUK committee.

Bernard Simon was president of the federation for ten years, from 1972 to 1982.

"We will miss them both, but are sure that we can approach them in the future for advice," said Jeffrey.

He also reported that Roland Minder had agreed to act a honorary treasurer until such time as a successor had been found. Negotiations to

A highlight of the FOSSUK year was the Landsgemeinde at Hebden Bridge, Yorkshire

ing the year he had attended AGMs and other functions of ten member societies in various parts of the country.

He touched on one problem discussed at last year's AGM and said he had written to the president of Swiss Club Northern Ireland to formally advise that the club's membership of FOSSUK had been suspended, but that "the door was always open for reinstatement."

Unfortunately there had been no response.

He said he would like to see new members join the committee, and they also had one vacancy for a delegate to the OSA Council.

"In the next worldwide list of delegates and deputies the UK will probably be the only European country with a vacancy," he said.

"What sort of impression will this make?"

fill the position were currently under negotiation.

On the financial front the president said that income during the year had slightly exceeded expenditure, but this was no reason for complacency. The small surplus was partly due to some UK delegates to OSA not claiming travel expenses. Donations and money raised from the raffle at last year's AGM also helped boost income. Annual subscriptions had also been slightly higher.

The editorial committee, responsible for the 'Switzerland in the UK' section of the Swiss Review, had held three

meetings under his chairmanship. Treasurer Valeria Ossola gave notice that she would retire in June, and Margrit Lyster and Peter Barber had also resigned during the year. All were thanked for their contribution.

The committee was looking for a new treasurer and an advertisement manager, and societies were asked to nominate suitable candidates.

Regrettably the section continued to run at a loss, due to insufficient advertising and sponsorship, although more donations had been received from readers.

The president said that dur-



## The day a kilted major 'joined' the Swiss Army

Dear Editor

When reading the article "In Great-grandad's army boots", another British citizen who took part in Swiss Army life came to my mind – Major C A A Robertson, MBE.

As a young man he did a lot of skiing and met the late Mr Gustav Senn, of Congleton, Cheshire, at Klosters in 1921.

Later, First Lieutenant Gusti Senn, Adjudant Fusil. Bat. 54, suggested that "Sunnyboy" Robertson, Major in the Scots Guards, should do a training course with him in the Swiss Army.

Major Robertson received permission from the War Office, and on March 31, 1929, he arrived in Basle.

There was an officers' dinner at a Basle hotel. The organiser was Major Paul Walker, Commander of Fusil. Bat. 54. On the way there he



**Gustav Senn: his friendly invitation to an English officer upset the Federal Council.**

was photographed accompanying Major Robertson – both, of course, in uniform.

The picture appeared in the press and caused awful consternation at the Swiss Army Office, and went right up to the Federal Council.

A court of enquiry followed and Gusti Senn received a reprimand.

He told the court that when he met the Guards officer at Basle station, he found him "dressed in a kilt" – what a lovely April 1st joke, much appreciated by the whole unit!

"Sunnyboy" Robertson tremendously enjoyed his time with the Swiss soldiers. He was treated with courtesy and respect, was given a fine mount and was also admired as a marvellous shot, and above all liked as a great companion.

He was offered a cup as a momento, but since such a gift could not be accepted by the British War Office, he went back to Switzerland in 1931 and presented the cup back to the battalion at an officers' dinner, on that occasion dressed in mess uniform!

He remained a great friend to many of his Swiss Army friends right up to his death.

I was privileged to be in the company of Major Robertson and Mr Peter Senn of the Manchester Swiss Club at a dinner of the Anglo-Swiss

Society a few years ago, and he told me a number of stories from his time in the Swiss Army. – **Mariann Meier, London NW6.**

## In contact

Dear Editor

Thank you for publishing my letter in the Swiss Review. As a result I have made contact with another Swiss family in our neighbourhood, and I would like to thank you for making this possible.

– **Denise Gray, Cooden, East Sussex.**

*The Swiss Review is an ideal means of bringing Swiss people together, especially those who live in isolated parts of the country. If there is no Swiss club in your area (see the list in the last issue) and you would like to contact someone from the homeland, send a note to the editor at Europa House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP.*

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## A second chance to win air tickets to Switzerland

We very much regret that two mistakes were found in the prize-winning crossword that was printed in the last issue of the *Swiss Review*, and we thank those readers who pointed it out to us.

In fairness to all readers we must declare that crossword invalid, and it is repeated on this page, with certain changes.

What was clue 3 down is now clue 2, and there is now a new clue 3. What was clue 9 across had been deleted.

*What hasn't changed is the prize.*

The sender of the first correct entry to be pulled out of the hat on the new closing date of July 15 will win two return tickets between Luton and Zurich offered by Edelweiss Air, worth £89 each.

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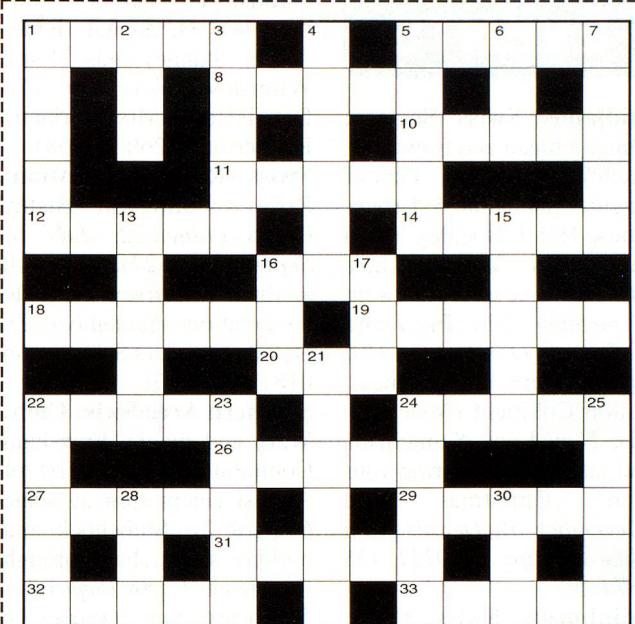
free accommodation for the night in the three star hotel.

The flight itself leaves Luton around 7pm.

### The clues

**Across:** 1. Change here for Tannenbodenalp. 5. Town across the Rhein from Vaduz. 8. Italian town south of Gt. St. Bernard Pass. 9. *Clue removed (see left)*. 10. French frontier town in Jura. 11. Loop with running knot. 12. 15th C castle by the Rhone. 14. Impossible (2,3). 16. Spike of corn. 18. River of deep gorges flowing into the Rhone. 19. Resort near Val d'Hérens. 20. Edible village near Einsiedeln. 22. Swiss NW frontier city. 24. Tourist destination in Grindelwald. 26. Capital of Canton Aargau. 27. Lausanne's port. 29. Requires. 31. South African antelope. 32. Famous for its North face. 33. Change here for the Stanserhorn.

**Down:** 1. Mountain pass SW of Andermatt. 2. Vase. 3. Fribourg's river (German spelling). 4. Town on Lake Maggiore. 5. Town at foot of Jura on River Limmat. 6. ...du Pillon. 7. Shabby. 13. End of road for Hahnenmoos Pass. 15. Village in Lotschental. 16. Summer (Fr). 17. Remnant. 21. Town on Vierwaldstattersee. 22. La .... flows into Murtensee. 23. Coating thickness. 24. Capital resources. 25. Jobs. 28. Wheel tooth. 30. Period.



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## COMING EVENTS

### Midlands Swiss Society:

Chinese meal and fireworks, Litchfield (July 19); First of August celebration, Aylesbury House Hotel, Hockley Heath (August 1); Visit to Three Choirs Vineyard, Newent (September 20); Film and buffet (October 18); Baschundora curry meal, Sutton Coldfield (November 15); New Look Samichlaus and international "bring your own" Christmas food (December 6). Details from Alice Phillips on 0121 458 3874.

**Edinburgh Swiss Club:** First of August celebration (August 1). Details from Simona Stirling on 0131-447 8571.

**Manchester Swiss Club:** First of August celebration (July 26); Bowling and

barbecue (September 7); Bernerplatte evening, Wilmslow Parish Hall (October 4), annual dinner dance, Stanneylands Hotel, Wilmslow (November 15). Details from Mrs Marianne Reutter on 01260 273 681.

**Swiss Rifle Association:** Rifle shooting at Bisley Camp (June 22, July 6; September 21); Match against Surrey Rifle Association (September 7). Details from Urs Schaefer on 0181 850 4117.

**Southern Area Swiss Club:** Walk and picnic, Frensham Common (July 6); First of August celebration at Seale (August 2); Stubehöck and holiday snaps, Farnborough Community Centre (September 5); Raclette party (October 3); Flower arrangements and tips (November 7); Christmas party at Farnborough Community Centre (December 12). Details from Vreni Rudkin on 01252 547 948.

**Tyne Tees Swiss Club:**

Raclette party, Whitehill Hall, Chester-Le-Street (June 29); First of August celebration, Woodside Mill, West Woodside, Wigton (July 19); monthly club meetings at the Three Tuns Hotel, Durham (September 27, October 25, November 29); Swiss Samichlaus party

at Whitehill Hall (December 6). Details from Mrs Nelly Scott-Niederberger on 0191-5190956.

**Aberdeen Swiss Club:** First of August celebration (August 2); AGM and Christmas dinner (November 22). Details from Susanne Weir on 01224 586 018.

## Swiss Relief Society's new president

Bernard Simon is the new president of the Swiss Relief Society. He has taken over following the retirement on grounds of ill health of Mr Peter Senn, who had held the position for the last 25 years.

At the society's AGM, Huldi Broadhurst was elected treasurer, and Marianne Reutter continues as secretary.

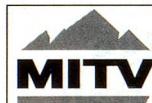
The meeting adopted a change of rule which made it possible for the society to take over the assets of the Swiss Relief Society, Liverpool, which had been

dissolved in March 1990.

Since its dissolution the funds have been looked after by the Consulate General in Manchester.

A very warm tribute was paid to Mr Senn by Ann Baudois, Swiss Consul in Manchester, who thanked him on behalf of the Swiss community for the devoted service he had given the society over the last quarter of a century.

At the same time Mr Senn's wife, Lilian, retired as a magistrate after 28 years' service.



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