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Switzerland in the UK



Mosimann serves giant freebie tea party for Londoners

"One lump – or two?" asks Swiss celebrity chef Anton Mosimann as he serves his glamorous guest, former Dr. No girl Ursula Andress – as well as the thousands of Londoners who turned up to enjoy a fabulous tea laid on by the Swiss Embassy at the famous Somerset House ice rink.

The buffet was laden with some of his specialities – traditional Swiss cakes, pastries and canapés – as well as hot chocolate and other drinks.

• **More pictures on centre pages**

New faces sought to represent UK Swiss in Berne

Swiss clubs throughout the UK are being invited to nominate one of their members to stand for election to the Council of the Swiss Abroad – known as the Parliament of the Fifth Switzerland.

The UK is allowed to send five people, three of them delegates and two deputy delegates, who will serve for the period 2005-2009.

The election will take place at this year's annual general meeting of FOSSUK – the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK.

The weekend event starts at Broadstairs on June 3.

Currently representing the UK are three delegates who are all members of London societies – Rose-Marie Breitenstein, Giuseppe

Broggini and Margrit Lyster.

The two deputy delegates are Françoise Logan of the Yorkshire Swiss Club and Alfred Wyser, who is president of Swiss Club Edinburgh and also secretary of FOSSUK.

They will all be eligible for re-election.

The longest serving is Joe Broggini of the Unione Ticinese. He became a deputy delegate in 1981, and in 1988 was nominated – not elected – as a delegate.

Rose-Marie Breitenstein became a deputy in 1993 and full delegate in 1997. Margrit Lyster became a deputy in 1993 and a full delegate in 2001.

Joe Broggini was born in Losone in the Ticino, qualified as an architect in Switzerland and came to London in

1967. His personal view is that the present delegates should step down and make way for new people.

"We have all done over and above our call of duty for the Swiss community in the UK," he told Swiss Review. "I also think candidates should be drawn from among all Swiss ex-pats, and ideally sit on the committee of one of the UK Swiss clubs."

Candidates must be registered with a Swiss Consulate, fluent in French or German, and be able to attend two Council meetings in Switzerland and up to four FOSSUK committee meetings a year.

• **Full details are given on the Swiss Review website: www.swissreview.co.uk.**

Charles sees opportunities for breaking into the Swiss marketplace

Prince Charles, who has made millions out of his Duchy Originals range of bio friendly products – although all his profits go to charity – is preparing to start exporting to Switzerland.

For some time a specialist shop in Geneva has had Duchy Originals on its shelves. But now the rest of the country is to be opened up in a big way, with exports of many of the 130 product range.

It all started 13 years ago when Charles, a strong advocate of organic farming, launched the Duchy Originals brand name to put his ideas into practice.

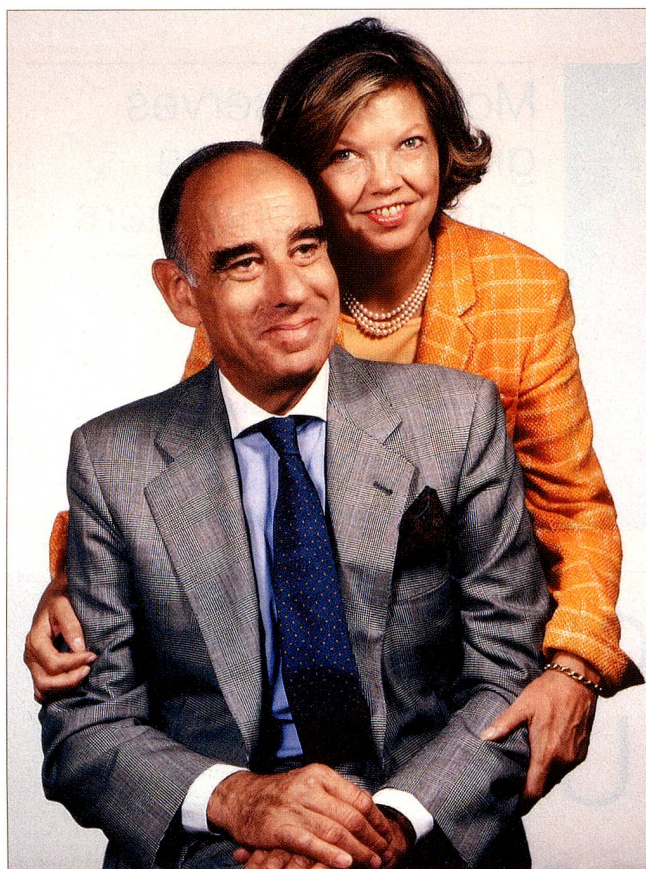
The result was packets of biscuits, made from cereals harvested on his own farm in Gloucestershire where they grow so high they smother weeds and give protection for birds and insects.

The full range now includes chutneys, jams and hair oil.

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

I want to meet you all, says new Ambassador



Alexis Lautenberg, who has succeeded Bruno Spinner as Swiss Ambassador in the UK, is determined to meet as many members of the Swiss community as he can during the next four years.

In a special message to readers of the *Swiss Review* he writes:

"My wife and I are delighted to be spending the next few years in the UK.

"It is a country I know well having spent many childhood summers here and having studied here as a postgraduate.

"It will now be fascinating to explore it from a professional point of view as the Ambassador of Switzerland to the UK.

"As Swiss living abroad you are also Ambassadors for your country and you all personally help to reinforce the image of Switzerland in

the UK, both through the Swiss Clubs and your informal networks.

"We all appreciate your efforts in this field.

"I look forward to seeing some of the clubs in action while I am here, and hope that ways of closer cooperation between them can be explored to promote their long-term sustainability.

"While in Rome we travelled a great deal around the country and intend to do the same in the UK.

"I am looking forward to visiting the Kent seaside at Broadstairs at the beginning of June to take part in the FOSSUK weekend, and hope to meet as many of you as possible during my posting in the UK."

Ambassador Lautenberg and his wife Gabrielle (pictured left) have three sons, all in their twenties.

Back in the land he loves

For Alexis Lautenberg, the new Swiss Ambassador to the UK, it has meant a return to the country he knows and loves.

Every summer, from the age of four until he reached 18 he would come here on holiday, staying with his aunt who lived in Cambridge.

A citizen of both Basle and Ascona, he was born in Zurich 50 years ago and completed his formal education at the University of Lausanne where he took a degree in political science.

Later, while working in the Swiss Army's planning department, he returned to the UK to take a postgraduate course at Essex University.

"At that time Essex University was very advanced in the application of political science," he recalls. "I found it absolutely first class."

When he joined the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs in 1974, he faced much more travelling as a diplomat.

He trained in Berne, Geneva and Stockholm, then transferred to Warsaw as deputy to the Head of Mission. Next it was back to Geneva with the Swiss delegation to EFTA and GATT.

In 1981 he moved to Bonn as head of the economic section of the Swiss Embassy there, and two years later was

promoted Counsellor.

In 1985 he took on the title of Minister when he became deputy director of the former Directorate of International Organisations.

A year later he returned to Berne as head of the Economic and Financial Service of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.

He was made an ambassador in 1993 when he became head of the Swiss Mission to the European Communities in Brussels, and four years ago he took up residence in Rome as Swiss Ambassador to Italy, Malta and San Marino, before moving to London.

Mr Lautenberg told the *Swiss Review* that for the last five or six years Italy has been in the process of devolving power to the regions, and while in his last post he made a point of visiting different parts of the country and meeting the people.

He fully intends to do the same in the UK, and early visits are now being planned to Scotland and Northern Ireland.

But on the controversial question of moving the Swiss Consulate General from Manchester to Edinburgh he said he was not yet in a position to say when it would happen.

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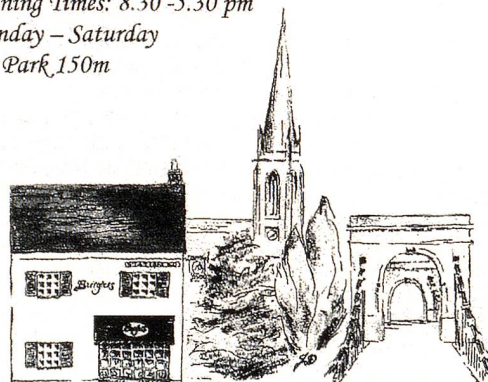
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Swiss Centre's proud name HAS been saved

Worries that the sale of the Swiss Centre building would mean Switzerland would lose its very prominent image in the heart of London have been dismissed by Urs Eberhard, the executive vice president of Switzerland Tourism.

He told *Swiss Review* that although the ten storey building facing Leicester Square had been sold to an Irish property group for possible re-development, safeguards had been written into the agreement to preserve its Swiss character.

Discussions have also been held with the City of Westminster to ensure that distinctive images, such as the Swiss Court, the famous Glockenspiel and the cantonal flags remain.

The future of the building itself has not been decided. It could be demolished and the site turned into a hotel or prestigious office block, or it could remain as it is – although, after 39 years it is



■ The Glockenspiel: 23 bells representing the 23 Swiss cantons

badly in need of considerable refurbishment.

But whatever happens to it, agreement has been reached that the name Swiss Centre will be retained.

When it was first built the Swiss Centre was the jewel in the crown of Swiss tourism, with the then Swiss National Tourist Office taking over the whole of the top floor with its spectacular views of London.

Swissair set up shop on the ground floor and there were the four unique Swiss Centre Restaurants in the

basement. In 1985, the arrival of the Glockenspiel, a reproduction of the historic bells in Berne and a gift to the City of Westminster from the Swiss Government, helped to make it a tourist attraction for visitors to London.

The erection of a bronze statue of Charlie Chaplin helped to reinforce the distinctive Swiss character of one of the busiest parts of London. Chaplin spent his last 14 years at his home overlooking Vevey – an identical statue stands on the quayside in Montreux.



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:

Creative House,
Snape Road,
Macclesfield
SK10 2NZ.

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 April is February 11.

READERS' LETTERS

Why do they love kicking Swiss democracy?

What I have been seeing lately on Swiss TV and in Swiss newspapers has distressed me. Especially as a Swiss Abroad!

Throughout the world the Swiss Abroad seek to show Switzerland (our Switzerland) in the best possible light.

Unfortunately, there seems to be a determination by more and more people at home to drag Switzerland in the mud. At whatever cost.

There was the case of that artist, a Mr Hirschhorn, who denigrated the coats of arms of the three original Swiss cantons with a picture depicting a torture scene from the Iraqi prison Abu Ghraib.

It showed a man on all fours lifting his leg like a dog and urinating over a poster of Mr Blocher, a member of the Federal Council.

When the papers wrote about some lapses in the behaviour of some American GIs in Iraq they were rightly condemned. But when some person affronts another person's dignity, why is there no anger?

What Mr. Hirschhorn in the exhibition sponsored by Pro Helvetia did is, in principle, as humiliating as the actions of

those GIs. But there is a large difference between them and Mr. Hirschhorn. The GIs were under a massive war pressure. We cannot say the same about him.

Politicians say the image of Switzerland is hardly changing. What daydreamers they are! If Switzerland carries on along the same track, it will be changing much quicker than we could imagine.

Switzerland is in danger of losing its good name, and especially the deep respect it has been enjoying in the world.

Why? Because there are some who take great pleasure in kicking Swiss democracy. They have lost all sense of decency or responsibility towards their country and the Swiss people.

They are the ones who should be called to account. I don't just mean the "artist", but the people running Pro Helvetia. To propose cutting their budget by 1 million SFr was, in my mind, the only right answer. – **Edgar Studer, Finchampstead, Berks.**

• Mr Studer was a Swiss Abroad candidate in the last Federal elections.



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Londoners flock to help celebs launch the UN's Year of Sport

It was a tea party, the like of which London had never seen before. Attended by stars galore. A brace of politicians. Plus a free invitation to all Londoners to join in the fun – for nothing. And Anton Mosimann, with his white chef's hat and spotted bow tie, was on hand to oversee the proceedings.

New Swiss Ambassador to the UK, Alexis Lautenberg, had decided to really push the boat out for the occasion. Taking over the skating rink at Somerset House in The Strand for what turned out to be a spectacular European launch for the UN Year of Sport 2005.

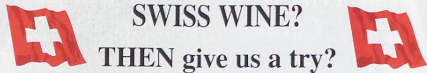
Awaiting the guests was a mouth watering buffet of some of Switzerland's culinary delights, designed to show there is much more to Swiss cuisine than chocolate and cheese.

Among the guests were former Swiss president Adolf Ogi and UK sports minister Richard Caborn. Swiss film star and former Bond girl Ursula Andress. Footballers Sol Campbell, Ramon Vega, Ashley Cole and Patrick Viera. And Swiss tennis champion Martina Hingis.



■ Above: Officially welcoming the event on behalf of the UK government is Minister of Sport Richard Caborn, backed by a lineup of sporting celebrities. Below: Queen of Wimbledon Martina Hingis shows she's also an excellent skater when she ventures onto the ice with children from the Hackney City Tennis Club in London's Clissold Park

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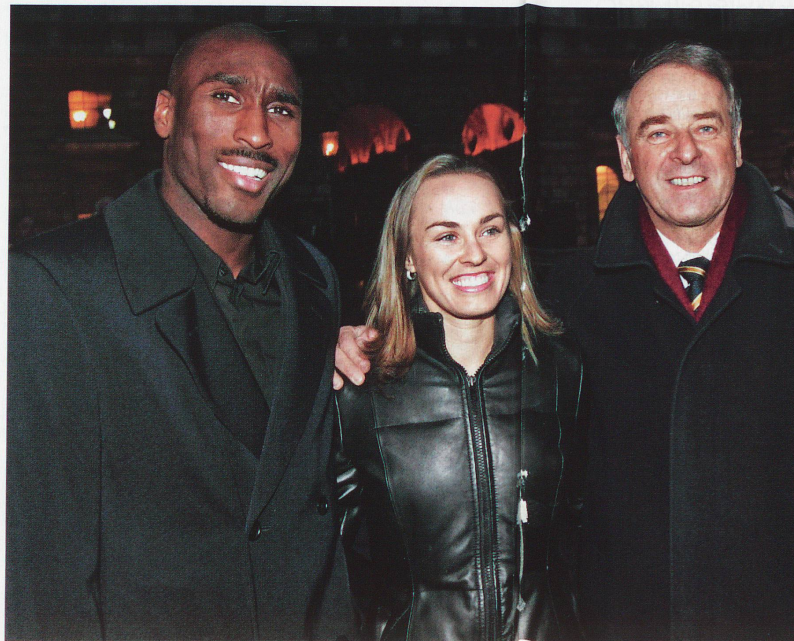
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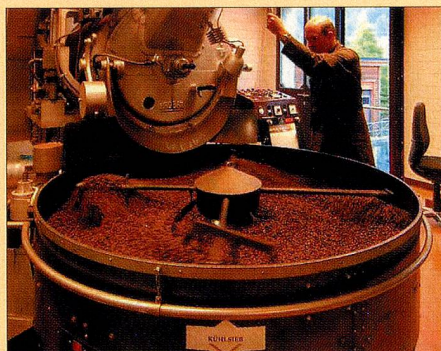
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■ Getting ready for the British market: High altitude coffee roasting in Zuoz

Now St Moritz comes to London – via Costa Rica!

For the first time Switzerland is to have its own pavilion at the giant International Food Exhibition opening in London on March 13 – in a big effort to increase Swiss food and drink exports to the UK.

Taking part are some of the biggest dairy food suppliers like Emmi, Smart & Quick, Alp Senn and Von Mühlenen.

But rubbing shoulders with the giants will be a little known coffee importer from Hampshire called Coffee Etc.

It's owner, Alex Brigham, told *Swiss Review* how she came to be involved.

"It was a chance meeting my parents had while holidaying in Costa Rica," she said. "They met the son of a Swiss coffee roaster who said the very best coffee was called St. Moritz and came from the highest coffee roastery in Europe – Café Badilatti at Zuoz in the Engadine."

The result was the setting up of Coffee Etc and the UK launch of St Moritz coffee.

New look, new worries, for Swiss railways

With the completion of the first stage of Rail 2000, some commentators have been drawing parallels between the controversial and expansive plan for overhauling the Swiss railway system and the problems that have afflicted the railway network in the UK during the last few years.

"Rail 2000 will change my life," Swiss transport minister Moritz Leuenberger explains triumphantly in the SBB/CFF's magazine, *Via*. That may be so for some, but not for all.

The new railway timetable, which came into effect in December, has certainly pleased travellers between Zurich and Berne, whose journey time has been cut by 11 minutes.

All thanks to a 45km section of track between Mattstetten and Rothrist which enables trains to travel at 160km an hour – and this could increase to 200 km an hour when a new security system has been approved.

The two cities are now less than an hour apart, compared with the 14 hours it took by stagecoach in 1843.

Most main line passengers have benefitted from the new timetable. A third of them are saving a quarter of an hour.

Lucky travellers between Fribourg and La Chaux-de-Fonds save 25 minutes. And the introduction of new trains means that most routes now have a half hour frequency.

But in some areas there is a downside. Ninety per cent of passengers have found their arrival and departure times have changed. Some regional

trains are no longer able to keep to their connection times with mainline trains and some routes have even ceased to operate altogether.

There is already an outcry in the Valais because the high speed Cisalpino express between Geneva and Milan no longer stops at Martigny.

Prices of train tickets have also been increased, by an average of 1.6 per cent. It is no longer cheaper to buy a return ticket on journeys longer than 120km. And the cost of season tickets has risen by up to 3.9 per cent.

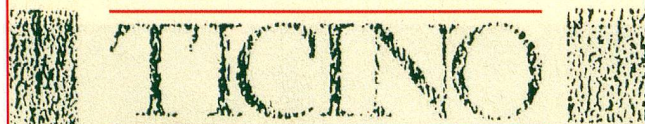
One of the most severe critics is transport expert and Vaudois MP Michel Béguelin, who fears Rail 2000 could turn out to be a lame duck.

"For the next five years it will get much worse, thanks to the cost savings decreed by Berne," he said. The reason: regional traffic will decrease, and cantons, hard pressed for cash themselves, will be told to make up the shortfall.

He said his fear was that the whole system would disintegrate, with regional lines no longer able to feed the mainline trains.

He added: "After having privatised its rail network, Great Britain has had finally to admit it made a big mistake – and has had to reinvest 150 billion francs as a result. Next year Switzerland is going to take the same route."

"It wouldn't surprise me if, sooner or later, Swiss voters are called to vote on the same subject they did in 1898 – the reunification of all railway lines into a national system."



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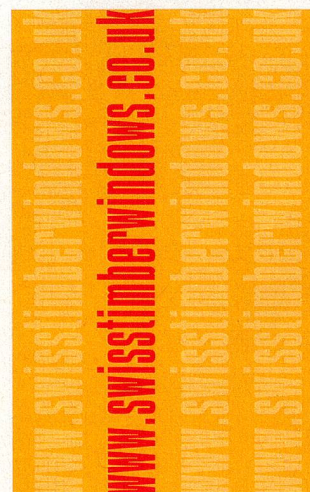
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Goodbye queues – now you can print out your own Swiss rail and air tickets

Preparing to travel from the UK to Switzerland just got much easier. Now computer users can not only buy their Swiss Railways and British Airways tickets in advance,



■ BA's new-style DIY boarding card

they can also print them out.

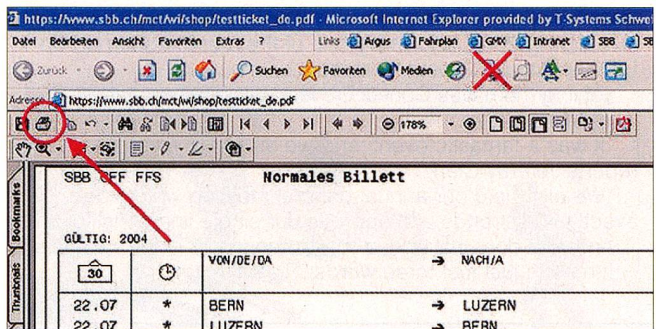
And in the case of British Airways they can avoid the queues at the check-in desks by also printing their own boarding cards.

Swiss Railways point out that at the moment there are certain restrictions on DIY tickets.

Unlike tickets bought at the station they are only valid for the day you specified when making the booking and cannot be changed later. If not used, they cannot be refunded.

And when presented to the ticket collector you will need to show your passport, or Half-Fare Card, as proof of identity.

You are also advised to print out a test ticket before making your first online purchase, as the sample



■ Easy does it – just print it out and show it to the ticket collector on the train

printed above.

Your ticket will cost the same as if you had bought it at a station, but Swiss Railways are investigating varying prices depending on the time and day of travel –

the method used by some low-cost airlines and phone companies.

• *More details on how to print your own tickets can be found on the Swiss Review website: www.swissreview.co.uk*

Drivers get a stark warning: It's no more one for the road

If you're planning to take your car to Switzerland on holiday – take care! It's more important than ever that you don't drink and drive.

On January 1, tough new laws came into force, designed to make Swiss roads safer. Statistics show

that drink driving causes 30 per cent of all road traffic accidents, and this rises to up to 50 per cent at weekends.

The new blood alcohol limit will be 0.5 milligrams per millilitre – the equivalent of one glass of wine.

The UK is more generous to

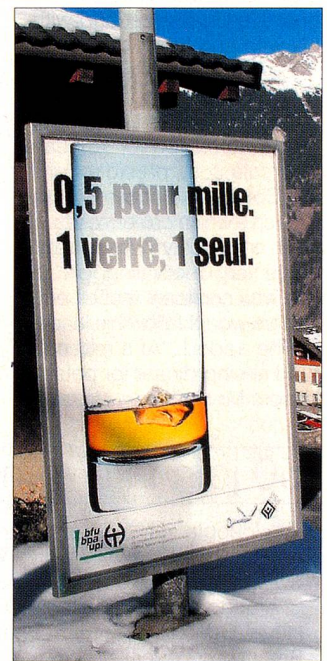
diners. Here you can have up to 0.8 milligrams per millilitre before committing an offence.

Road traffic police in Switzerland are now allowed to stop any driver at random and carry out a roadside check. A positive result means a medical examination and a blood test.

A driver whose blood alcohol measures between 0.5 and 0.79 milligrams could be sentenced to up to three months in prison and a Sfr. 5,000 fine.

Above 0.8 milligrams it could mean up to three years in prison and a fine of Sfr. 40,000, plus losing his licence for at least three months.

Giving the green light to the new law the Swiss Council for Accident Prevention says it could result in 48 fewer traffic deaths every year – as well as preventing 320 serious injuries.



■ Roadside reminder in Switzerland

And it's slow down or pay up

The tough new drink and drive law puts an end to the romantic vision of a couple going out for a leisurely dinner and sharing a nice bottle of Swiss wine.

They must either take a taxi home at the end of the evening, or lay off the alcohol.

But even if they don't drink there is another new restriction they will have to observe.

Watching your speed is now more important than ever

when you're driving a car in Switzerland.

You face losing your licence for at least three months if you go 25 km/h over the speed limit in towns, 30 km/h on country roads or 35 km/h on a motorway. Plus a threat of heavy fines and prison terms.

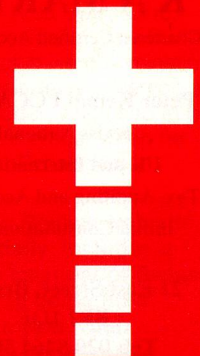
More police are being put on road patrols to enforce the new speeding laws, and have also been told to carry out random tests at any time to check on alcohol levels.

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It's fun all the way at World's End

The World's End Swiss Club, based in Aylesbury, doubled in size during 2004, and every one of the members turned up for their annual Christmas shindig.

Joining them was Consul General Ulrich Hunn and his wife, Marie-Claire.

"It was a fantastic event, and we all had a jolly time," reports Jeremy Clark.

"We also held our annual general meeting which took exactly 60 seconds – to approve our single line constitution."

And what does that unique constitution require of the members? It runs to just three words: "To have fun!"

£1 million gift to renovate the 150 year old Swiss Church

A windfall gift of £1 million has put new life into the fund raising efforts of the Swiss Church in London, who aim to raise £3 million on a major renovation scheme.

The generous benefactor is André Hoffmann, a former member of the church who now lives in Switzerland with his wife and four children.

Born in Basle, he lived in France as a young man before moving to London, where he stayed for 15 years.

Ursula Jost, president of the Consistoire of the Swiss Church – which celebrates its 150th anniversary in April – said it was a very "motivating" gift, and she was confident that other donors would follow his lead.

She added: "At a recent fund raising dinner for potential donors Mr Hoffmann explained

why he has chosen to support the Swiss Church project. It is because of the architectural quality of the work of Herzog & Meuron, because of the work the Swiss Church has carried out in the past on behalf of Swiss people and the community, and, most importantly, because of the message that the project is sending out.

"A convincing cultural, religious and, in the truest sense of the word, communal presence, is vital for Switzerland in foreign countries."

Herzog & Meuron are the London based Swiss architects who built the Tate Modern and the Laban Dance Centre.

Said Mrs Jost: "In working with them on design ideas we experienced their ability to respect and enhance the given architectural heritage."

"Move to Britain" Blair's man in Berne urges Swiss firms

A new campaign to persuade Swiss companies to invest in Britain is under way, following the appointment of a British Embassy investment specialist to a new office in Zurich.

The move was revealed by the new British Ambassador in Berne, Mr Simon Featherstone, when he talked to a meeting of the New Helvetic Society in London.

He revealed that Swiss companies already employ around 100,000 workers in the UK.

"As ambassador I see one of my key roles as getting round the major Swiss investors, highlighting opportunities which the UK represents, and acting as a point of contact if there are any problems," he said.

And he is sure the new drive will produce results. "It is striking how positive they are about the UK economy, with its healthy growth and flexible labour market," he said.

The ambassador is also confident about stimulating greater trade between the two countries, saying that the UK already exports more to Switzerland than to huge markets such as China or India.

Looking at tourism, he said that 700,000 British people now visit Switzerland each year and this, coupled with a large resident expatriate



■ Simon Featherstone: the new British Ambassador in Berne

community, meant there was "a huge reservoir of goodwill which British people feel towards Switzerland."

Mr Featherstone, who is 46, joined the diplomatic service when he was 22. A Mandarin speaker, he had a lot of experience in Asia, serving in Hong Kong, Shanghai and two periods in Beijing, first as science and technical officer and later as consul-general.

His last job before moving to Berne was head of the foreign office's European Union Department.

Science is one of his pet subjects, and he told the NHS audience of a visit he paid to CERN in Geneva, home of the revolutionary particle physics accelerator and birthplace of the Internet.

He said that British IT and software experts were playing a leading role in developing next generation IT in preparation for an ambitious experiment starting in 2007.

"Some 15 petabytes of data will need to be stored," he said, "Enough to fill a stack of CDs twice the height of Everest, and a processing power equivalent to 100,000 high performance CDs."

50 join in a candlelit dinner at West Surrey club

Fifty people sat down to a candlelit dinner organised by the very active West Surrey Swiss Club, held at Pyrford near Woking.

Among them were Consul General Ulrich Hunn, Consul Hans-Peter Flueckiger and the Rev David Leuenberger of the Swiss Church

in London. The guests were welcomed by club president Ruth Crozier, and she and the club were warmly thanked by the vice president of the Anglo-Swiss Association, Bill Fullagar.

Musical entertainment was provided by Grace Cookey-Gam, with Mariko Brown on the piano.

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