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Switzerland in the UK

Sharp rise in the number of Swiss living in the UK

The number of Swiss citizens residing in the UK has risen dramatically in the last two years, according to figures released by Berne.

The total – which also includes dual nationals – has reached 26,217. This was a rise of 478 during 2004, and 461 during the previous 12 months.

In 2002 the increase was 373, and 363 in 2001, making a total over the last four years of 1,574.

In fact the real size of the Swiss population in the UK could be much greater because the figures do not

include children, nor Swiss who have not taken the trouble to register with the Swiss Embassy or Consulate.

This trend is not confined to Britain. The total number of Swiss citizens living abroad continues to rise, and by the end of 2004 had passed the 620,000 mark for the first time. Of this 380,000 – more than half – are in the EU countries: 166,199 in France, 70,455 in Germany, 45,442 in Italy and 21,532 in Spain.

But only 20 per cent have registered to vote in elections.



'Doctors' on call at Embassy

Stars from the BBC soap opera, *The Doctors*, were invited to the Swiss Embassy to celebrate this year's Golden Rose of Lucerne TV festival.

Pictured above with Swiss Ambassador Alexis Lautenberg are (left) Ben Jones and Sean Gleeson, with festival director George Luks on the right.

A total of 48 programmes from Britain are on the shortlist of 126, chosen from a record number of 331 entries from all over the world.

Sir Bob Geldof will be in Lucerne to receive the charity award from Harry Belafonte.

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 screenshot shows the homepage of the Switzerland in the UK website. The header features a red and white cross logo and the text 'SWITZERLAND IN THE UK'. Below the header, there are several sections: 'IN NEWS' with links to 'Switzerland more aware', 'Return of the Swiss Abroad', 'The Boiling Bakers', 'The Swiss in the UK', 'Form 111 - the key to free healthcare', 'Swiss health', and 'Swiss health assessment means...'. The main content area has a banner for 'Friday 26, September 2003' and 'SWITZERLAND IN THE UK' with the subtext 'The online magazine for Swiss living and working in the UK'. To the right, there are links to 'SWISS REVIEW' and '13th Annual Banquet & Ball'. At the bottom, there are links to 'Forum 111 - The Key to Free Healthcare', 'Switzerland in the UK', and '13th Annual Banquet & Ball'.

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



From the sands of Basra to the Swiss snowfields

An army of British soldiers travels to Verbier after six months in Iraq to take part in one of the toughest sports of all – alpine racing. Then it's back to Iraq again. British troops have been going on this vigorous course every winter for the last 21 years.

The full story is on the centre pages.

Shortage of candidates for OSA election

Swiss clubs are showing a disappointing lack of interest in nominating candidates for election to the Council of the Swiss Abroad.

All the clubs have been sent full details of this unique opportunity to join the ranks of the what is known as 'the Parliament of the Fifth Switzerland', which looks after the interests of Swiss living abroad and is a direct link with the federal assembly.

Seats on the Council, which meets twice a year, are allocated according to the number of Swiss citizens in the different countries.

The UK is entitled to three delegates and two deputy delegates, who will be elected at the AGM of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK, to be held at Broadstairs in June.

But FOSSUK president Jeffrey Long points out: "Any Swiss in the UK can be nominated. They don't have to be a member of a society. In

fact Swiss clubs represent only ten per cent of the Swiss population in the UK.

"Delegates are expected to look after the interests and concerns of all Swiss nationals in the UK.

"But they are completely independent. They vote in the Council without instructions. They represent their views based on their own knowledge and experience."

Any reader who would like to be nominated should contact Jeffrey Long on 01274 588 189.

A survey carried out by the Swiss Review among the Swiss clubs revealed there was very little interest in putting names forward.

One exception was the Southern Area Swiss Club, whose president, Vreni Rudkin, said the club were nominating one of their newest members, Edgar Studer, who used to be a council member when he lived near Schaffhausen.

London's Swiss Church celebrates 150 years

The Eglise Helvétique in London was founded in 1762 by a group of Swiss abroad, most of whom were not at that time officially Swiss as they had come from Neuchâtel, Vaud and Geneva which were not yet part of the Swiss Confederation.

At first, services were held in rented accommodation, in Castle Street, now part of Charing Cross Road. Then in 1775 the first Swiss Church was built in Soho by the Swiss for the Swiss community.

It remained a centre of worship and a focal point for the Swiss 'colony' for 80 years until 1855.

Why then, a new church? The prospective cost must have been daunting, but the current building was in a state of dilapidation. It was situated in an evermore overcrowded and insalubrious area noted for its lawlessness.

Yet all around, Victorian London was opening out. The developers had been hard at it – John Nash's Regent Street, new bridges over the Thames, a new open space called Trafalgar Square and new roads cutting through slum areas. It

Built in the mid 19th century for just £5,000 and now a priceless architectural gem, the Swiss Church is about to celebrate its 150th anniversary. Here EMEL ROCHAT tells the history of this venerable building

was time to make a move.

A special committee was set up by the 'Anciens' of the Church to look for a new site. One of the recently built roads was Endell Street (1844/45). Bold and forward-looking and undaunted by many reservations, the Trustees of the church took a decision, and in 1853 they signed a lease for a plot of land 40ft x 80ft at the north-western end of Endell Street.

The architect George Vulliamy was engaged to submit plans which were duly approved and accepted. But there was the matter of funding the project.

Initial estimates were £1,500 for the land and £2,000 for the building and an annual ground rent of £10 – substantial sums for those days. Appeals for funds were made to the expatriate Swiss community and to the homeland. An appeal was

also made to the British public.

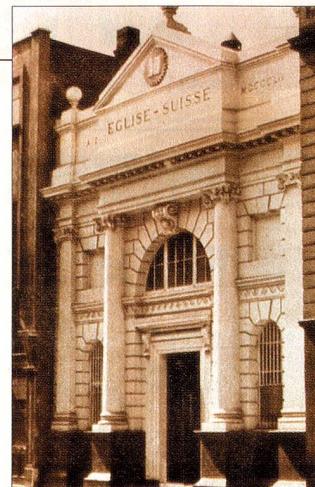
Swiss generosity and offers of haven to British protestants over the centuries were invoked, not least to John Knox at the time of the Reformation!

By 1854 building expenses had continued to mount up and the final cost of the Endell Street church had risen more than £5,000. Thanks to a generous donor and contributions from the canton of Zurich and the protestant churches in Berne the target was finally reached.

The resulting building with "Eglise Suisse" engraved on its façade was striking and modern-looking.

Also engraved, was the date MDCCCLIV. This had been a little optimistic. In fact the inaugural service was held on February 4, 1855.

A further big financial effort was made the following year and the lease was purchased so that the Swiss community would inherit the Church and the land it stood on, in perpetuity. In 1973 the Swiss Church was designated a Grade II – a building that English Heritage deems



Dwarfed by its neighbours, the Swiss Church is one of the hidden architectural gems in the heart of London's West End

worthy of preserving for posterity. At the present time redecoration and renovation are urgently needed as well as much thinking about the role of the Church in the Swiss community, in the locality and in a changing world.

A major fund-raising project is ongoing. The architects Herzog and de Meuron have been engaged to plan this with us, and we look to the future with optimism.

From 1 June 2005 the **Swiss Embassy in London** has a vacancy for a

Switchboard Operator/Office Assistant (Full-time)

Key tasks (50%):

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- Administration and programming of the telephone system
- Troubleshooting and instructing new staff to manage their own extension and voicemail

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not later than 30 April 2005 to:

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Tel. 020 7616 6000, ext. 301
e-mail: Ulrich.hunn@eda.admin.ch

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- Administration and programming of the telephone system
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- Processing and keeping accounting records of private staff phone bills (Excel program)
- Troubleshooting with regard to the telephone system
- Time permitting, assisting with basic clerical tasks

Key skills required:

- Excellent communication skills both on the telephone and in writing
- Friendly voice and patience
- Technical knowledge of Ascotel Office telephone system (or ability to learn)
- Computer skills (Excel and Word)
- English, German and/or French languages (spoken)

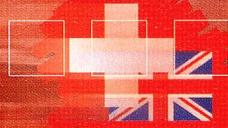
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Timely advice before you travel

The UK Department of Health has finally brought out a new and revised version of its publication, Health Advice for Travellers, pictured right.

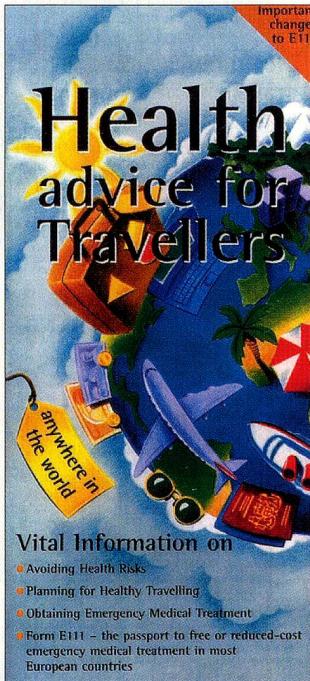
It now includes details of how both British and Swiss people resident in the UK can obtain free or low cost medical treatment when they visit Switzerland.

The previous edition had incorrectly ignored the fact that Switzerland now offered the same benefits as countries in the European Union.

At the same time new regulations have been brought in ruling that Form 111 – the official passport for treatment – is now only issued on an individual basis. Previously only one form was needed to cover all family members.

The booklet, and copies of Form 111, can be obtained from any Post Office.

The government warns that obtaining treatment in other countries could seem complicated to UK residents used to the National Health Service, and that anyone not properly prepared could find



it extremely expensive. Hence the need for Form 111.

In Switzerland, the form must be produced whenever any treatment or service is requested. Normally, you will have to pay the full costs

yourself and claim a refund afterwards.

In addition, you will have to pay a fixed charge – known as the 'excess charge' or 'franchise' – for each 30-day period of treatment. This is not refunded.

However, on your return to Britain you can normally claim back 90 per cent of the treatment costs exceeding the excess charge.

The form covers visits to a doctor (but not a dentist) as well as treatment in a public hospital.

But, in addition to the excess charge and ten per cent of the costs, hospitals will also charge a small non refundable fixed daily charge to cover the cost of board and accommodation.

You will have to pay 50 per cent of the costs of ambulance transport within Switzerland, including air ambulance.

Later this year there will be more changes, when the UK adopts the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). It will be issued automatically to anyone who has applied for the new E111 form.

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 June, is April 27.

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Swiss artists in the UK plan show in Geneva

It was formed only four years ago. But already Swiss Artists UK has scored a major coup by having a number of its members' works accepted for exhibition at the historic Château de Penthes, just outside Geneva, which houses the prestigious Museum of the Swiss Abroad.

They will be joining a long planned display of banners that had been submitted by 29 Swiss clubs in the UK as part of a nationwide competition.

Both exhibitions, which are the result of a initiative by FOSSUK president Jeffrey Long, will be officially opened on Saturday, April 30.

The president of Swiss Artists UK, Annelise Vogel, told *Swiss Review*: "There are now 15 members of our group and we meet once a year in London and arrange exhibitions of our new work.

"Our members' work covers many different styles, and each artist has contributed his or her own version of 'Attitude', which is the title of our Château de Penthes exhibition.

"Our aim is to form and maintain a group of Swiss artists in the UK to share information on forthcoming events and exhibitions, to promote members' work and to negotiate support and financial backing through the strength of the group's network.

"We also want to recruit

more members as we feel 15 is too small a group.

"We are really looking forward to the Château de Penthes exhibition and hope it will attract many visitors to look at our contemporary work and that in due course it will be appreciated in our home country."

The Château, originally built in the 14th century, houses many treasures and artifacts about the life and work of eminent Swiss who have worked abroad as bankers, civil servants, explorers, archaeologists, industrialists, doctors, theologians, scientists, military men and artists.



■ Harmony in Appenzell, by Ann Sharpe, who has lived and worked in Basle



■ Allons au Bois, a water colour aquarel by Beatrice Kuenzy



■ The Hug, a carving in French limestone by Annelise Vogel

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Founded in 1856, the City Swiss Club offers an interesting programme of events throughout the year. It provides an excellent forum at which to meet people drawn from a wide variety of occupations and including a cross-section of staff and management at many of the Swiss companies operating in the UK.

In addition to several informal evenings held throughout the year, we also have occasional joint events with other Swiss clubs and societies. The highlight of the year is our popular annual Banquet and Ball at Claridge's – this year it will be held on Saturday, 19 November. Traditionally we hold our AGM and dinner at Mosimann's Club which is always very much enjoyed by our members.

To learn more about the Club and/or receive a membership form, please contact: Julie Streader, City Swiss Club, c/o Secure Trust Banking Group PLC, Arbuthnot House, 20 Ropemaker Street, London EC2Y 9AR.

Telephone: 020 7012 2400

www.cityswissclub.org

info@cityswissclub.org



Back from Iraq, British troops face more excitement on the slopes above Verbier

It was Sir Arthur Conan Doyle creator of Sherlock Holmes, who brought skiing to Switzerland, and Edward Whymper who first made alpinism fashionable – and even encouraged Winston Churchill to climb the highest Swiss peak, the Monte Rosa.

But one of the most enduring examples of a close relationship between the British and the Swiss can be seen every winter when a contingent of soldiers from the Royal Armoured Corps and the Army Air Corps invade the Valaisan resort of Verbier to face the rigours of high alpine skiing.

It all began 21 seasons ago in the days of the Cold War when British troops stationed in Germany faced the threat from the Soviets. Unable to return to Britain on leave because of the time it took to travel back and forth across the Channel, they found Verbier an ideal place to have

fun – and keep themselves fit at the same time.

"What we do here has no particular military training value," Major Oliver Norton confessed to the *Swiss Review*. "That is to say, we are not learning how to fight and survive in the mountains. That's not the sort of thing tank drivers and helicopter pilots need to do."

"What this does is bring young officers and soldiers together and teaches them a new skill – alpine racing.

"Anyone who has raced knows the mental and physical attributes that are required to hurl yourself off a mountain. Slightly different from the normal skiing most of us do."

"It challenges them – as a result the instructors come back year after year because one thing soldiers are good at is being told what to do, and doing it without question.

"This means that on Day 1



■ Royal Armoured Corps Major Oliver Norton presents a bottle of champagne to veteran instructor Maurice Gard, who comes out of retirement each year to help train the troops. BELOW: Verbier's Director of Tourism, Patrick Messelier, who has been welcoming the soldiers to the Valaisan resort for the last 17 years.

up to 20 officers and soldiers who have never before been to a ski resort, let alone put on a pair of skis, are taken to the top of the Lac de Veau and sent down the piste.

"Despite the carnage, they get up and soon learn how to ski. And within five weeks they are racing at speeds of up to 70kph in a Super G. Quite the most terrifying thing I have ever done – the speed and exhilaration are beyond comprehension."

The soldiers and their regiments pay all the costs themselves – including the fees of ten instructors for six days a week.

"Of course there are cheaper places than Verbier," said Major Norton. "But why should we go elsewhere when we have so many friends here? At least a dozen officers



met their wives here – including me! And many instructors, bar owners and local people have come over to weddings in the UK.

"We have never had one serious incident with the village or the police. With 100 soldiers here for five weeks every year that's quite a triumph."



■ He calls himself a novice skier, but Captain David Pollard was soon able to demonstrate his newly acquired skills racing down to Verbier

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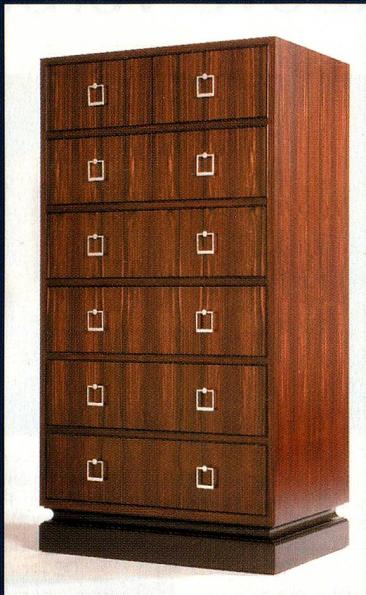
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Plans well in place for Broadstairs weekend

An action packed weekend is promised for this year's get-together for the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK.

It will be held in the South East seaside town of Broadstairs, starting on Friday, June 3.

The town owes much to its association with Charles Dickens, who lived and worked here and based many of his scenes on the locality.

Every June the town holds a Charles Dickens festival, and there is much to recall the great writer, with the Charles Dickens public house, the Dickens Museum - and even Bleak House and The Old Curiosity Shop.

The FOSSUK festivities open with an informal dinner at the town's Cultural Centre on Friday evening. The

following morning delegates will be able to find out how the FOSSUK web site works.

After lunch begins the hard business of the day, with the annual general meeting, and among the speakers will be the new Swiss Ambassador to London, Alexis Lautenberg.

Elections will also be held for places on the FOSSUK committee, as well as elections for delegates and deputy delegates to represent Swiss in the UK on the Council of the Swiss Abroad.

There will be a Ticinese flavour to the evening dinner at Marchesi's restaurant, and Sunday will feature a coach tour to places of interest in the region like Deal and Walmer Castle.



■ Walmer Castle, built by King Henry VIII in 1539 to repel invaders from France and Spain.

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Here's a new taste of Ticino

The centenary of the Anglican church in Lugano has inspired food writer and bon viveur Alberto Dell'Acqua to write a fascinating book about the culinary love affair between the British and the Ticino.

Canton Ticino has always had close bonds with Great Britain. It is not known for sure when the first Ticinese arrived in the United Kingdom, although the presence of some of our Grigionese compatriots at the defence of Hadrian's Wall 2000 years ago has been documented.

However, it is certain that innumerable citizens of Canton Ticino have immigrated to the United Kingdom over the centuries. They have contributed – and continue to contribute – to the economic and cultural development of this country in a very tangible way.

For example, it is quite surprising that during the 19th century Ticinese immigrants driven by economic hardship from the Val di Blenio, their poor and narrow valley carved out of the steep mountains of Canton Ticino, were instrumental in the introduction of the revolutionary

process of refrigeration into the food production cycle of the United Kingdom.

They threw themselves into the creation of ice cream that everyone could afford (the famous "penny ices"), and they opened a significant number of restaurants in Great Britain.

Between the two World Wars one of the mayors of London (a predecessor of Ken Livingstone) was a certain Sir John Gatti, whose ancestors had come, yes, from the Val di Blenio.

But numerous British citizens have also come to our small Ticino. There are few places in the world that can boast of having a tourist campaign brought about by no less than William Turner.

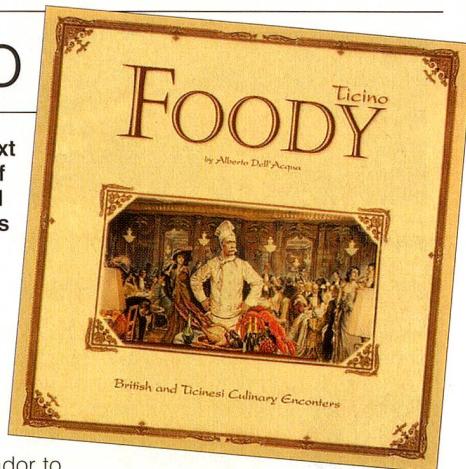
Since 1800, British tourists have been crossing Europe to reach our uncontaminated haven on the southern slopes of the Alps and thus admire magnificent scenery and benefit from our sunny and

We will be reviewing the book in our next issue, but meanwhile here is a taste of what it contains, written as a foreword to the book by another Ticinese, Swiss Ambassador Alexis Lautenberg.

temperate Mediterranean climate.

As the Swiss Ambassador to Great Britain, and as the first ambassador to come from the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland since the opening of the Swiss diplomatic mission in London, I am particularly honoured to be able to contribute to the realisation of this book, which unveils anecdotes and little-

known facts from the long, cordial and intense relationship between two regions so different geographically but so similar in the spirit of entrepreneurship and creativity of its people.



Embassy backs Swiss golf day

Jeffrey Long, the president of FOSSUK, is organising the UK's first Swiss Golf Day, officially supported by the Swiss Embassy.

It will take place on May 23 at Batchworth Park golf club Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, and is expected to become an annual event. Jeffrey Long said: "I hope many Swiss and their friends will join us for a great day out, either for the whole day or just to come along for the official dinner in the evening."

Full details can be obtained from Mr Long at 30 Finsbury Drive, Bradford BD2 1QA, or by phoning 01274 588 189.

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Free tickets to Berne or Lugano in this Swiss Review contest

To celebrate the recent launch of Darwin Airline's new scheduled air service with flights six days a week linking London's City Airport to Berne and Lugano, two free return flights are being offered to one of our lucky readers.

All correct entries will be put into a draw, which will take place on May 4. The winner will be notified by post and no correspondence can be entered into.

Free flights entry form

Please answer these four questions:

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2. What is the cost of a London-Berne ticket? _____
3. On which date did the service start? _____
4. I would like to fly to: Berne _____ Lugano _____

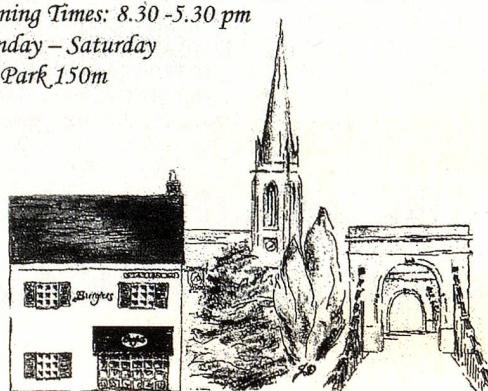
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Post your entry to:
Darwin Airline Contest, Swiss Review, Creative House, Snape Road, Macclesfield SK10 2NZ, to arrive no later than April 30.

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The hunt is on for yodellers... and Swiss ice hockey players

Do you know of any Swiss alphorn players, accordianists or yodellers?

Then FOSSUK president Jeffrey Long would like to hear from you.

He intends to compile a national database of all Swiss musicians living in the UK.

He told Swiss Review: "I get lots of requests from clubs and other organisations asking to be put in touch with Swiss musicians who could be called on to help liven up their events.

"But, unfortunately, they seem to be in very short supply."

If you can play any musical instrument, or know of any other Swiss who can, then contact Jeffrey on 01274 588 189, or email him at jlong@meakin.net.

Meanwhile another search is on - this time for ice hockey players.

From Oxford reader James Schall writes: "I am wondering if there are any Swiss or dual nationals living in the UK who play ice hockey. I play for a

recreational team in Oxford and we come across teams from Russia, Canada, Slovakia and the Czech Republic who are now based in the UK.

"It would be great to have a Swiss team."

James can be contacted at: schall@btinternet.com.



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