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Switzerland

in the UK

3/07

Exporting joy with the Magic Lantern

It's a most unusual Swiss export. But from the initial reaction of its first 'customers' there is every expectation that it could sweep across Britain.

And UK Swiss, particularly members of Swiss clubs, are being asked to help introduce it to their own localities.

The Magic Lantern is an educational cinema club for junior children. The idea started with teachers in Neuchâtel who were looking at ways of filling what they considered an important gap in their children's curriculum.

They were concerned that while children were being exposed to film from a very early age, particularly through television, they were being taught little, or nothing, about the medium's cultural heritage.

Switzerland now has Magic Lantern clubs in 68 towns, attracting more than 30,000 children, and teachers in many other parts of Europe are now

taking up the idea. With the backing of the Arts Council, the first UK club has opened in Brighton and was an instant success.

But spreading the idea to the rest of Britain is not going to be easy, especially as the Arts Council, with the recent cut in its grant, has to tighten its purse strings.

Balint Bodroghy, chairman of Magic Lantern UK is hoping that Swiss people here can help pass on the message. In particular he is asking Swiss firms in the UK, such as Nestlé and Caran d'Ache, whose own products are so appealing to children, to give their support to the movement. In Switzerland Migros is a major benefactor.

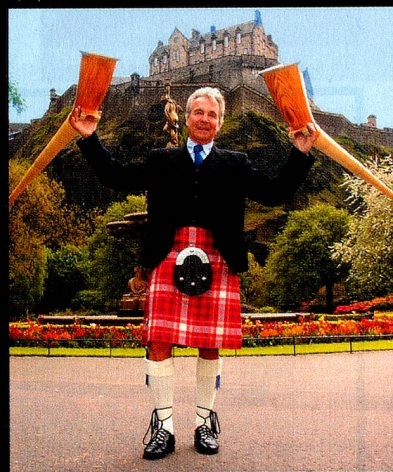
After the Brighton debut he said: "The show left a lasting impression on the children. Back at school, children acted out the scenes, argued about their favourites – and all said they wanted to come again."

The Glockenspiel is on the move



The Swiss Glockenspiel, a major tourist attraction in London's West End, is moving to a new home. The giant clock, 23 animated figures and 27 golden bells are being completely revamped and will form a triumphal arch over Swiss Court. See story on centre pages.

Prelude to Swiss Highland Games?



Swiss in Scotland will be having a field day (or three) when a party of Swiss visitors, led by two Swiss bagpipe bands will be meeting their Scottish counterparts at three different events in the Highlands – at Fort Augustus, Fort William and Inverness. Read about it on Page 8.

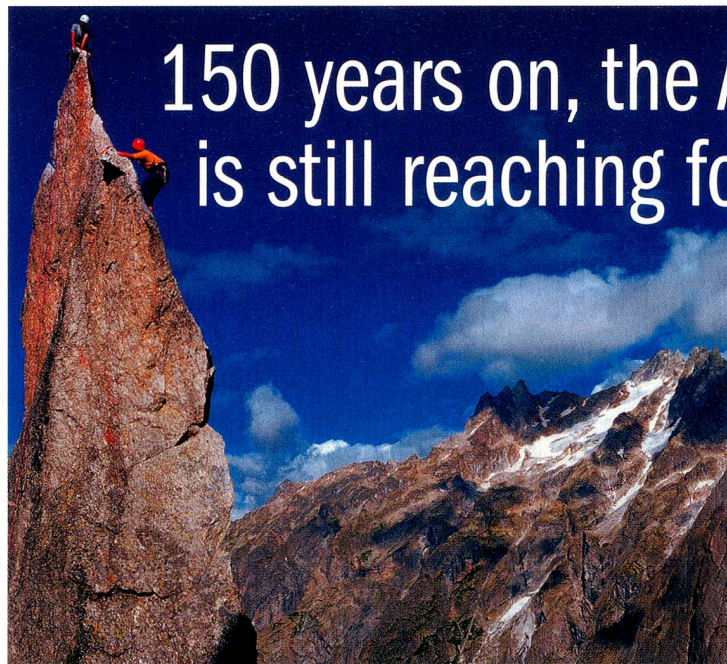


Switzerland in the UK has its own Internet site, continually bringing you up to the minute news of the latest events as well as major stories from the most recent issues and links to other interesting sites in both the UK and Switzerland. To access it go to: www.swissreview.co.uk

News about forthcoming events of interest to our readers should be emailed to: editor@meakin.net

briefs

- **EXPECT** to see more Swiss speciality products appearing in UK foodstores following the appearance of eight leading Swiss food and drink manufacturers at this year's big London Food Exhibition. Three were presenting award winning cheeses, sweets made from alpine herbs, chocolates, sauces and soups.
- **SHOCK** news for diplomatic staff at the Swiss Embassy in London and regional Consulates General. Like their colleagues all round the world they have been told they are to lose their tax perks following changes in the fiscal system in Berne. As a result their tax bill could be twice or even three times higher than at present.
- Swiss cheese not only tastes better, it is also much healthier than many other cheeses on sale in the UK. A new survey by Consensus Action on Salt and Health (CASH) has found that Emmentaler has only 0.4g of salt per 100g. But Kraft's Dairylea cheese slices has 2.8g - "and that's horribly salty, even more than Atlantic seawater," said CASH's chairman, Professor Graham McGregor.



150 years on, the Alpine Club is still reaching for the skies

It has long been the proud boast of climbers from the UK that it was the British who created the Alps. And in a way that's true.

Before those first hardy adventurers discovered the mountains of the Oberland, the Valais and the Grisons, these were forbidden regions, the haunt of spirits and demons.

Three hundred years ago one foolhardy English traveller, a monk called John de Bremble threw

caution to the winds and decided to attempt to take a shortcut over the St Bernard Pass on his way to Rome.

It was a frightening experience, but when he finally reached the other side of the Alps he fell on his knees and prayed: "Lord, restore me to my brethren that I may tell them not to come to this place of torment."

He was not the only one to fear the mountains. In 1723 a Fellow of the Royal Society wrote a treatise in which he described in detail the fearsome dragons that lived in the Alps.

All of this changed when a century and a quarter later rather more daredevil Brits appeared on the scene. Country gentlemen with time and money on their hands and learned dons escaping from their sheltered life in the cloisters of Oxford and Cambridge all found an exciting new challenge and a new sense of freedom actually climbing up those mighty granite peaks.

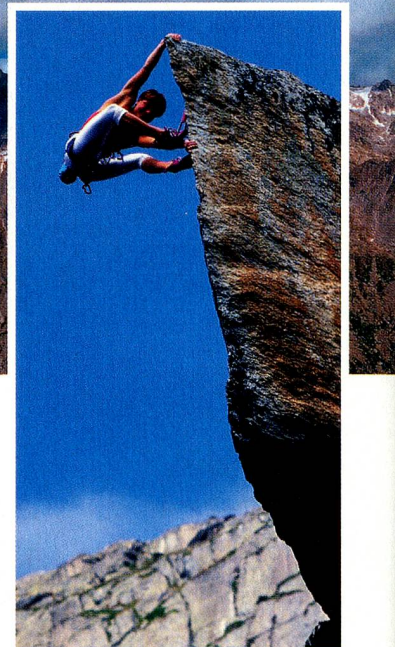
And they were followed by the writers and the painters who unveiled the secrets of these once hidden landscapes to an incredulous outside world.

The entrepreneurial Swiss were not slow to follow in their footsteps and used their own skills to making the mountains accessible to all, opening hotels and restaurants and constructing railways, bridging deep ravines and tunnelling through the very heart of the Alps.

The exploits of those pioneers who made it all possible will be recalled when hundreds of mountaineers, most of them from Britain, gather this month in Zermatt, the spiritual home of alpinism, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the formation of the Alpine Club.

That event took place at a meeting held at Ashley's Hotel in London's Covent Garden in 1857, and it marked the start of the golden age of mountaineering.

Within the next eight years the



Main picture: Still one of the most impressive climbing routes in Switzerland - the Fiamma, a solid granite flame in the Bergell valley, Grisons

Inset: A real life cliffhanger - and not for the faint hearted. But this is what makes climbing in Switzerland such an invigorating, rewarding challenge.

vast majority of the great alpine peaks were conquered by the club's existing or future members, winding up with the dramatic ascent of the mountain that until then had been deemed unclimbable - the mighty Matterhorn.

Exactly 100 years after the latter achievement, the BBC reinforced the memory of Britain's leading role in mountaineering by sending a team of cameramen in climbing boots to Zermatt to create another first - the first live televising of an actual climb, which was shown around the world.

So proud was the Beeb of this historic exploit that it sent its director general to supervise the event.

The idea of forming the Alpine Club came from the well heeled former Cambridge graduate William Matthews, when he dined with a fellow climber, the Rev H L A Hort.

A few months later, euphoric at succeeding in climbing the 14,000 ft Finsteraarhorn, the highest peak in the Bernese Oberland, he decided to go ahead and immediately starting drawing up a list of prospective members.

Two years later the membership had grown to 150 enthusiasts and its success was assured.

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Civic welcome for Yorkshire Swiss



Amid the splendour of one of the gems of Yorkshire architecture, the Lord Mayor of Bradford gave a reception in the City Hall to members of

the Yorkshire Swiss Club. Pictured above are (sitting) the Lady Mayoress, club president Evy Wardill and the Lord Mayor, with (standing)

emeritus president Jeffrey Long, St Clare Logan, Diane Irwin, Philip Heaton, Marlise Heaton, Pat Clare, David Wardill, Françoise Logan and Karl Kägi.



How to contact the editor

Reports of Swiss society activities and coming events, and articles and correspondence for the 'Switzerland in the UK' section of the Swiss Review, should go to the editor:

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• The 'Switzerland in the UK' supplement appears four times a year. The deadline for the next issue containing UK news, to be distributed in September, is August 7.

New drive to boost trade links with the NW

In a bid to reinvigorate business links with the North West of England, a number of Swiss business leaders have flown to Manchester for face to face meetings with their UK counterparts.

Organised by Claudio Mazzucchelli, director of the Swiss Business Hub at the Swiss Embassy, the visitors included representatives from Berne, Basle, Fribourg, Geneva, Lucerne, Obwalden, Ticino, Zurich and Western Switzerland.

At an introductory seminar the Honorary Swiss Consul in Manchester, Arthur Broadhurst, told of one

of the earliest Swiss businessmen to visit Manchester, Johann Caspar Escher of Escher Wyss, who marvelled that in a short 15 minute stroll he counted 60 spinning mills. Many of his compatriots followed him, stayed and prospered, with the result that a thriving Swiss community still exists in and around the city today.

He added: "Manchester and Switzerland have always enjoyed a strong and visible relationship based on mutual respect, free trade, political security and freedom of speech."

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Spiritual home for the Swiss in the UK since 1762



BEAT WAHREN, who helped make the long-gone Swiss Centre Restaurants the talk of London, tells the inside story of the rise and fall of the four restaurants under the Swiss Centre that epitomised all that was best in Swiss food and drink

'It was infighting at the top that led to the self-destruction'

It was once the place to see and be seen, the unfortunate Swiss Centre and its famous and trendsetting Swiss Centre Restaurants serving up to 3,000 customers every day and the Gourmet Corner Shop with an exciting range of freshly made products.

The Swiss Review has been telling the story of the well deserved resting place in Appenzell of the grandiose naïve painting once gracing the walls of the former and very popular Rendezvous restaurant.

I am not surprised that no one from the coalface was ever invited to the celebrations and no thought was wasted on the many of the extremely hardworking, imaginative staff of the restaurants, situated in one of the most glamorous parts of London.

Let's recall a few moments of the unique Swiss Centre and the ongoing infighting at top management level, leading to its eventual destruction, demise and rather sad end.

It was certainly a very poor representation of the much vaunted Swiss hospitality industry which was noticed the world over.

I worked there as Chef de Partie from its opening in November 1967 to 1969 and again from 1975 to 1981 as Executive Chef, when I was able to observe how top managers and directors were

more interested in pursuing their own goals, power games, pleasures – and piffing – than in promoting and expanding the unique and stylish complex to the point of their own and its self-destruction.

My input and creations were seldom appreciated by the top management, but others on the London scene were quick to copy my

menu style and promotions.

On my arrival in 1967, the personnel manager's first task was to point out to me the many job applications he had on his stack, should I not perform as well as expected.

No time or effort was wasted in making anyone welcome or acquainted with the workplace and environment. Joining the kitchen team the very same evening, I soon realised that the organisation was overrun by customers and extremely poorly organised.

Having been trained as a chef in one of Basle's top eating temples, working for the following two years in the kitchens of the posh restaurants of the Palais des Nations of the United Nations, the UIT and OMS in Geneva, completing my National Services with the physically and mentally very challenging and "fearsome" pushbike

troops, I was certainly in the best physical and mental condition to deal with the extreme workload confronting everyone in this wonderful and exciting place. Most of the opening crew represented some of the very best qualified people of the Swiss and Continental hospitality industry.

After the first month of slogging it out, on payday I received the proud sum of £19 net in wages. The result of this insulting pay policy was that a third of the staff packed their bags and headed for the ski slopes in Switzerland, which offered better conditions and fuller pay packs. However, my performance and the acute shortage of Chef de Parties, meant I got a promotion and a little more money.

But this bloodletting of crew went on



The famous Glockenspiel which for 22 years, thanks to an historic initiative by Switzerland Tourism, has been a unique symbol of Switzerland in the very heart of London, is to have a new, and even more prestigious, home.

It was in 1985, to mark the 400 years of the City of Westminster, that Switzerland Tourism, together with the people of both Switzerland and Liechtenstein, presented it to the citizens of Westminster as a token of friendship between the two countries.

At the same time a large parchment scroll in a gilded frame, bearing the seals of the Swiss Confederation and the Principality of Liechtenstein, was presented to the then Lord Mayor and still hangs in the Lord Mayor's Parlour today. It ends with the words: 'It is our fervent hope and desire that this carillon may ring out across the next few hundred years to this noble city of Westminster, as a symbol of everlasting friendship and unity.'

The Glockenspiel has always stood at the corner of the 10-storey Swiss Centre, dominating Leicester Square, where it has delighted Londoners and up to 90,000 visitors from all over the world who pass beneath it every day.

But many people wondered what its future would be when, with what London Swiss called 'unforgivable shortsightedness', two of the then owners of the Swiss Centre, the Swiss Bank Corporation and Swissair, decided to sell the building for what was said at the time to be a ridiculously small sum. Switzerland Tourism, with just 24.5 per cent of the shares, had no option but to follow suit.

Now, empty and derelict and only partially occupied by cheap souvenir shops, the Swiss Centre has been finally sold to the Belfast-based McAleer & Rushe Group. Their

for a few more months. Six months after the opening, of 84 trained and highly motivated top Swiss, German and Austrian chefs, bakers, butchers, pastry chefs, confiseurs and chocolatiers only two of the start-up team chiefs were still working there out of a compliment of 250 staff.

The same picture prevailed in the Service team, but the lure of swinging London, offering an escape from the more unadventurous and stifled Switzerland, kept the place going with a replacement crew. By then, the incapable Executive Chef and the MD decided that moving on was the better option.

All the time my English greatly

improved thanks to the English School in Shaftsbury Avenue, supplemented and enhanced by the relentless swearing of the Chief Engineer (even Gordon Ramsay could have picked up a more extensive repertoire), who was fighting to adjust the top line Swiss equipment not made to work with the UK power fluctuations and us chefs, washing all the equipment including the electrical ones, with copious helpings of water for the twice daily clean-up.

The management never believed that investment of time and money in the working troops was a good idea and by end of November 1968, a year after opening, my only work colleague

Another London initiative from Switzerland Tourism

A new home for the Glockenspiel

intention is to have it demolished and replaced by an ultra modern, glass faced building. Planning permission is expected to be given shortly.

And what about the Glockenspiel, which would be rather out of place on the side of the new building?

Once again Switzerland Tourism has come to the rescue. In conjunction with Westminster City Council, agreement has been reached that it should be incorporated into a giant, 12m wide triumphal arch to be erected across busy Swiss Court at the point where it adjoins Leicester Square. Swiss Court itself was formerly New Coventry Street and was renamed by the City Council to celebrate the 700th anniversary of the Swiss Confederation in 1991.

Switzerland Tourism and the original designer, Theodor Kernen of Kernen Time-Werlt AG, have asked the new designers to retain many of the Glockenspiel's original features, together with some additional surprises.

As shown in our illustration, the centrepiece clock will display all the signs of the Zodiac, the days of the week, the date and the phases of the moon. Alongside four animated befallings will be 27 giant gold-painted bells.

Right across the top of the arch, seen from both sides,

will be a colourful procession of 23 moving figures of herdsmen, musicians and animals depicting the age-old annual procession up to the lush pastures of the high Alps.

And nearby, remaining in their original locations, are two other reminders of Switzerland: the Golden Crown of Solothurn, presented to mark the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977, and the Swiss Cantonal Tree, displaying the coats of arms of the Confederation and the 26 cantons, which joined it 14 years later. Flanking it on either side will be two flagpoles with the Swiss flag flying side by side with the Union Jack – reinforcing this outstanding gesture of solidarity between Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Albert Kunz, former London director of Switzerland Tourism, who was the guiding force behind all these initiatives, said: "We all owe a deep debt of gratitude to the City of Westminster for allowing the Golden Crown, the Wappenbaum and now the new Glockenspiel to represent Switzerland in Swiss Court."

Walking underneath the glockenspiel, these pedestrians are shown to the same scale as the arch itself



left for Basle and a more civilised life.

One example of excellent staff motivation I shall never forget was during an extremely busy evening service when the Chef Rotisseur, instead of going for a scheduled break, was eating an apple while working.

The General Manager, on one of his rare evening tours at the coalface, spotted this and screamed that he was eating his money and instantly dismissed him. Top forward thinking management style indeed!

Unwinding with the team after service of another absolutely exhausting Saturday evening with over 2,500 happy customers at the Rendezvous

bars, we had a surprise visit by the General Manager and his wife.

While enquiring about the business and informed by the Restaurant Manager, he commented to his wife: "You see, I was not even here and still earned over £2,000."

Overhearing this comment prompted me to call on him the very next day, telling him that earning £2,000 a day while not even being present was a sickening thought, so – how about a pay rise for myself and the whole team? We got one – but it was not £2,000 a day.

Still, swinging London was bustling around us and after my girlfriend moved into my Hampstead pad, work

at the Swiss Centre Restaurants became bearable, especially as I got promoted to Production Manager, working day shifts only.

From a Chef's point of view, the kitchens under the Swiss Centre offered a choice hardly seen by anybody in the profession, even today.

Yes, there was the normal cooking process, but even that was on a much greater scale than anyone was experiencing anywhere else.

There was a butcher station with smoking chamber for all the different sausages and cold cuts.

The bakery produced a selection of 17 different breads, buns and rolls, turned out on a daily programme,

then followed by the ever so tempting pastry choices, a wide range of daily freshly made ice cream and, last but not least, a choice of chocolates, pralines and truffles – all of a quality and selection never seen in London on that level prior to the days of the Swiss Centre Restaurants.

However, after two years I was the only one remaining from the start-up team and decided to return to Switzerland where I attended the Hotel School, got married to my former girl, and joined the Mövenpick operation.

■ In our next issue Beat Wahren tells how he returned to London and more mayhem.

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Manchester club's new president

The world's oldest Swiss club has a new president, with Julie Baker taking over the helm at Manchester Swiss Club from Jackie Schlaefli, wife of the city's former Consul General, Gilbert Schlaefli.

Julie (pictured right) has known the club since she was a baby. Her father, Bernie Simon, has been a leading figure in the 144-member club for more than half a century.

He had joined the club committee in 1956, and over the next ten years was secretary, vice president and president.

And for the following ten years, from 1969 to 1979, he was president of FOSSUK – the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK.

Julie herself became a member of the Manchester Swiss Club committee in 2000 and since then has played a leading role in organising a wide variety of events club members enjoy every year.

At the recent AGM two new members were elected to the committee: Jürg Bentele and Peter Vogt.



Winds buffet Swiss golfers

Strong winds were an unexpected hazard for golfers taking part in the Swiss Golf Day held at Hampton Court Palace Golf Club in April.

Men outnumbered women golfers, but they all found conditions impeded play – and of the five prizes being offered only two were actually awarded.

Overall winner was Ray Mistovski with 37 Stableford points, and the leading lady was Geneviève Higgin with 30 points.

But there was no prize for the longest drive contest, because none of the players finished up on the fairway. And the 'nearest the pin' prize also wasn't won, because no one managed to land on the green.

Organiser Jeffrey Long admitted that while it was a beautiful sunny day conditions were far from perfect because of the blustery wind, but added: "We played in glorious surroundings and a very good day's golf was followed by an excellent meal." The event's sponsors were R&B Wines and Suisse Connection.

The next event will be Trophy Day at Highgate Golf Club in North London on Friday, September 14.

Details can be obtained from Jeffrey Long on 01274 588 189.

Meanwhile Jeffrey has been driving to Lausanne plotting the 1,000 km route he will be walking on his epic trek from London to the capital of French speaking Switzerland.

Anyone who would like to sponsor him is asked to write to him at 30 Finsbury Drive, Bradford BD2 1QA.



Pia Stoll, wife of Colonel Bernard Stoll, the Swiss defence attaché in London, Jeffrey Long and lady winner Geneviève Higgin.

Dr. Louis Guenin

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Pestalozzi Village is reaping its rewards

As it approaches its golden jubilee, the Pestalozzi International Village in East Sussex is seeing the first fruits of its current aim to take young people from the world's poorest regions and give them opportunities they would never have had in their home countries.

Originally created to provide a refuge for 40 orphans from war ravaged Europe, the Pestalozzi Village has in the last ten years welcomed 150 students from disadvantaged countries and shown them how to achieve their full potential.

It is the only organisation in the UK dedicated to exclusively providing educational scholarships for academically bright young people from Africa and Asia.

There is a rigorous selection process. The pupils, aged 16 to 19, have to demonstrate high motivation, self discipline, leadership abilities and, above all, make a firm commitment to assist in the future socio-economic development of their home

communities. Their demanding two year course, combines the study of at least six academic subjects with more than 150 hours of community work in the Hastings area.

They enjoy acting as ambassadors to the world outside the Village and actively work with a large number of local schools and community groups – at the same time turning it into an opportunity to help promote international understanding and sustainable development.

Many of them have gone on from their Pestalozzi studies to win full scholarships at prestigious universities in the UK, Germany and the USA.

And most have since returned to their own countries to establish educational programmes of their own or to find other ways to help the disadvantaged.

Typical of the former pupils is Kwenzakwenkosi Ncube, who was one of the first to be selected to study for the International Baccalaureate.

She has since been studying cardiology in Birmingham and afterwards returned to Harare as a fully qualified doctor.

She said: "I am very grateful to Pestalozzi Village and to all those whose hearts are set on changing the destinies of young people from the developing world.

"Without them I would not have made it to the medical school and I would never have had this opportunity to give something back to my people."

The Village's chief executive, Derek Marshall, fully expects that in the next few years he will see increasing evidence of the impact the Village had on impoverished communities.

He said: "Many of our Pestalozzi graduates are still relatively young. At this point the oldest will only be in their mid twenties and just coming out of university.

"We now expect them to go home and make a huge contribution to their communities."

Two years ago, with the realisation that most of its buildings were more than 50 years old and reaching the end of their economic life, the Village launched its first ever fund raising to finance a complete regeneration programme.

It's a very ambitious project and, says Derek Marshall, to succeed it will require a considerable infusion of money from both the public and private sectors.



Swiss Ambassador Alexis Lautenberg inspects the well manicured grounds of Pestalozzi Children's Village with the village's chief executive, Derek Marshall

Children in the UK first heard of the name Pestalozzi in the 1950s in a book written by the late Mariann Meier called The Young Traveller in Switzerland.

Mariann was for many years the doyenne of the Swiss community in London and her book became a classic in children's literature.

In it she told of the first children's village, in Trogen, Appenzell, created as a settlement for war orphans, and named after the 18th century Swiss educationalist and philanthropist Heinrich Pestalozzi.

The book is still available from www.amazon.co.uk at £5.95.

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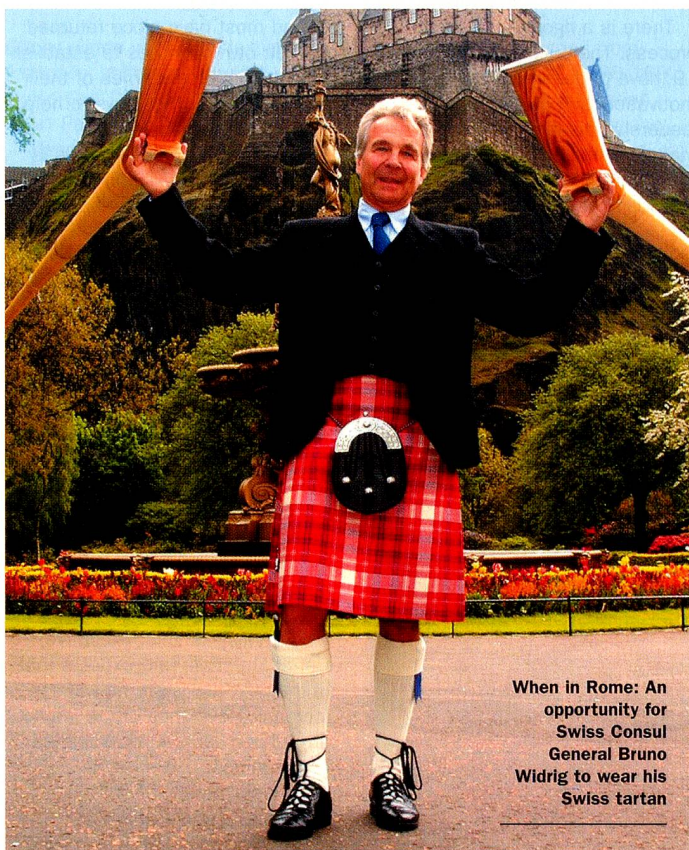
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