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REGIONAL EDITION

UNITED KINGDOM & IRELAND

EDITORIAL

Dear readers, happy New Year! 2019 has begun with a great deal of political uncertainty around the eventual Brexit outcome. Despite these adversities we are not left alone: every page of this issue confirms and testifies that Swiss authorities are really walking through this with us. They personally made sure that all our readers could learn about the recently concluded agreement between the Swiss and the British governments regarding our rights.

■ *We are also fortunate to have a member of the OSA council – Franz Muheim – who is a voice for us in the UK and in our homeland, together with the other local delegates. In addition, there are Swiss clubs all over the country and many other citizens working in the different communities to whom we can always write and refer. Many of us have now to apply for settled status but it is an effort that we can make all together.*



GIOIA PALMIERI,
«UK & IRELAND PAGES»

BREXIT: Swiss-UK Citizens' Rights Agreement

In preparation for the UK's exit from the EU, Switzerland and the UK have reached an agreement to secure the rights that Swiss nationals living in the UK currently enjoy. At present, the free movement of persons agreement between Switzerland and the European Union governs the rights of Swiss in the UK, and this will continue to apply during the anticipated transition period.

Every Swiss citizen and their family members looking to remain in the UK beyond December 2020 (the expected end of the transition period) will have to apply for the new permanent residence permit, known as settled status.

The settled status scheme will open fully at the end of March 2019 and the deadline for applying will be 30 June 2021 (subject to there being a transition period). In order to be eligible for settled status, you'll need to have started living in the UK by 31 December 2020 and have lived in the UK for a continuous 5-year period. If you've lived in the UK for less than 5 years, you'll generally be eligible for 'pre-settled status' instead. The fee to apply is £65 for an adult and £32.50 for children under 16, though it will be free if you already have a valid permanent residence document or indefinite leave to remain.

You'll be able to complete the application form online, with support over the phone or in person if needed. Trial phases have shown the process to be quick and straightforward in the majority of cases. When you apply, you'll need proof of your identity (valid passport or national identity card) and your residence in the UK.

We appreciate that there is still a great deal of political uncertainty around how the coming months will unfold and the eventual Brexit outcome. That is precisely why in our discussions with the UK authorities, we ensured that the Swiss-UK agreement covers every possible scenario. In the unlikely event that there is a no-deal exit, the Swiss-UK agreement will apply from the date the UK ceases to be an EU Member State, 30 March 2019.

Switzerland and the UK are now working to conclude relevant processes to ensure that this agreement is ratified by 29 March 2019. More information is available in the FAQs page of the Embassy's website (www.eda.admin.ch/london/brexit), which will be continuously updated as the remaining uncertainties are clarified. Your rights will be secured in any scenario.

The Embassy of Switzerland in the UK is pleased to be able to bring you this reassuring news after what has no doubt been a period of uncertainty. The Embassy remains committed to seeking the smoothest and strongest possible relationship between Switzerland and the UK after Brexit, and is, as ever, ready to answer any further questions that you may have.

EMBASSY OF SWITZERLAND IN THE UK



SWISS CITIZENS' RIGHTS: A talk with Swiss Ambassador Mr Fasel and UK's OSA delegate Franz Muheim



In preparation for the UK's exit from the EU Switzerland and the UK reached an agreement on citizens' rights last December. Every Swiss citizen and their family members looking to remain in the UK beyond December 2020 can apply for the new permanent residence permit,

known as settled status. In response to this important news, we have addressed some questions to the Swiss Ambassador to the UK, Mr Alexandre Fasel and to Mr Franz Muheim, UK delegate to the Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA) and member of the CSA Executive Committee:

Swiss Review: Has the Embassy undertaken any additional planning in case of a no-deal scenario?

Ambassador Fasel: We have deliberately ensured that the agreements we have reached with the UK government, including on citizens' rights, trade and aviation, cover any possible Brexit scenario including no deal. In the event that there is not a deal between the UK and the EU, the agreements will come into force on the day of departure in March. If there is a deal, they will come into force at the end of the transition period.

SR: How do you plan to reach every Swiss citizen living in the UK in order to ensure that they are aware of the option to apply for settled status?

FAS: As well as through these pages, we have a regular newsletter which is emailed to all Swiss citizens registered at the Embassy. Through this, we've sent updates at every important stage of the process so far. We also use our social media channels including Twitter and Facebook, and I will take part in a live Q&A on Facebook later this month, so please check our social media channels to find out when this is scheduled or to watch back. Additionally, we regularly update the FAQ document on our website and have staff ready to answer queries by phone and email. If any of the Swiss clubs wish to organise an information event, I or a colleague will be delighted to attend to answer questions in person.

SR: Does the Embassy have any outstanding concerns about Swiss expats' rights in the future?

FAS: In short, no. The agreements are comprehensive and have been concluded at an early stage. We've had assurances from the UK Home Office that the Settled Status application process has shown to be straightforward during testing phases and that decisions will be reached quickly. Once the scheme opens we will of course monitor it closely and communicate any concerns or feedback that the Swiss community has expressed to us directly to the Home Office.



SR: *Which are the positive aspects of this citizens' rights agreement that the Swiss community should be aware of?*

Franz Muheim: Swiss citizens in the UK will need to know how to safeguard their status in the UK after Brexit. A major concern is the uncertainty about what will actually happen. Will the UK parliament accept the withdrawal agreement with the EU, will there be a disastrous 'No Deal' or will there be a people's vote with remain as an option?

The agreement between Switzerland and the UK will define the status of Swiss citizens who are not dual nationals and live in the UK after Brexit. This is excellent news. It will prevent Swiss citizens from being further in limbo about their status. Using its 'Mind the Gap' strategy, Swiss Government negotiated a deal which will leave us in a status which is at least as good as that of the 3 million EU citizens.

SR: *As a Swiss citizen living in the UK, which are your main concerns regarding the application for settled status?*

FM: A key feature of the agreements between Switzerland/EU and the UK is that Swiss and EU citizens resident in the UK will have to apply for settled status. However the approval will not be automatic and there will be over 3 million people applying. This is a huge task and things will very likely not fully go as planned. I recall that in 2016/2017 the Home Office rejected over 20% of the applications for certified residency by EU applicants which all had lived in the UK for over five years. Even if this failure rate is reduced significantly there will be Swiss citizens for whom the application process could become very painful.

After Brexit we will have an electronic settled status without a residence card or a stamp in our passport. This could disadvantage a Swiss citizen looking for jobs or housing or opening bank accounts, e.g. by employers, landlords or banks simply not bothering to check. It is also very worrisome that the UK Government plans to share our settled status data, including a recent picture, with 'public and private sector organisations in the UK and overseas'.

SR: *According to the Government webpage, an application will first undergo an automatic check based on tax and benefit records. What do you think?*

FM: I hope this will be sufficient to grant settled status for professionals, salaried workers or self employed with a regular income. While a pilot project with EU citizens applying seems to confirm this, I am worried that the application process could work less well for unpaid carers of children and elderly, for retired Swiss in the UK and for young Swiss who have left school or university and are trying to find a job. In addition, all of us will need to support the Swiss who will need help with submitting their application via a smart phone.

Ambassador Fasel will soon take part in a Facebook LIVE broadcast to answer all of our questions and offer more detail on the agreement. Keep an eye on the Embassy Facebook page for a date to be announced: www.facebook.com/swissembassyuk

For further information please check the Embassy's website: www.eda.admin.ch/london/brexit

SAVE THE DATE: Next FOSSUK's AGM in London

The 2019 FOSSUK AGM & Culture weekend will be organised in London from the 17th to the 18th of May 2019. It will be hosted, kindly, in the Embassy of Switzerland in the UK. Further information and details will follow on our website and social media pages.

www.swiss-societies.co.uk @ukswiss @FOSSUK

OXFORD: ALAIN Berset visits Swiss students at the Lincoln College

Fabian Soltermann, the president of the Oxford Swiss Society and Anita Noll, the vice-president, welcomed the President of the Swiss Confederation Alain Berset to the beautiful Lincoln College MCR last 25th October 2018. After taking some time to talk with students, the President even showed the young Swiss his selfie skills. We asked Fabian to tell us how this extraordinary meeting went...

Swiss Review: Why did Berset come to Oxford?

Fabian Soltermann: The idea of inviting such an important figure of the Swiss politic to Oxford came up one year ago when the Vice Chairman of BlackRock in London Philip Hildebrand, Ambassador Alexandre Fasel and the Dean of the Blavatnik School of Government Ngaire Woods, met by chance at an event at Lincoln College. Thanks to the huge efforts of these people it was then possible to welcome Alain Berset, the President of the Swiss Confederation, one year later. The purpose of the visit was to cultivate good relationships, to give Swiss students abroad (as in the example of Oxford University) the chance to talk and discuss with their President. Furthermore, to have a critical discussion about the Swiss role model of democracy and its political system in the special setting of the Blavatnik School of Government.

SR: How did you welcome him?

FS: A large percentage of the Swiss students in Oxford and international friends of Switzerland accepted the invitation of the Oxford University Swiss Society to give Alain Berset a warm, informal welcome to the Lincoln college MCR before a formal dinner. The Lincoln college MCR is known as the most Swiss room in Oxford, because of the



A selfie with Berset taken after the dinner in front of the 'Swiss wall'.

© Nina Mangold

unique wall with crests of Switzerland and Swiss cantons, honouring the good relationships with our Country and the founder of the Berrow Foundation, the Marquis de Amodio. Welcoming Berset was supposed to happen before the formal dinner at college. The welcome had to be post-poned to after dinner due to the packed schedule of the Swiss President: he gave a speech at the 'Digitaltag 2018' around lunch time and towards the evening a live interview at the Swiss television. The Swiss Society spontaneously organised 30 bottles of Swiss wine from the Staatsgut of Fribourg, which is the region where both Berset and Fasel come from and welcomed the guests. After dinner in the MCR,

Berset proved to be a president of the youth, taking selfies and group pictures with everyone.

SR: What did he say to you?

FS: We talked about the 'Digitaltag' in Zurich and future strategies for Switzerland. He said: 'I can be honest with you, sometimes we do not know the answer, we are not experts in everything'. Berset's sentence made me realise that we are all normal humans at the end and for this reason we need the commitment and contribution of everyone. Some people have to find the answers, and a few important people – like Berset – have to make sure that there is an environment where people have the freedom and resources to find these answers. One of these places is Oxford, and Switzerland has to offer many more.

SR: What are your personal feelings about this experience?

FS: It was an amazing experience which every Swiss student in Oxford will remember for a lifetime. For many of us, unlikely to happen in Switzerland, we met our President in a very intimate environment during our time abroad in the UK. Berset impressed me with his honest, direct, and thoughtful answers to challenging questions during the Blavatnik talk. He was not giving escaping non-sense answers, like some politicians tend to give when they are asked uncomfortable questions.

More info about Oxford Swiss Society:
www.oxford-swiss-society.co.uk



Talk organised by Ngaire Woods, the dean of the school, followed by discussions at the Blavatnik School of Government.
© Nina Mangold

SWISS CHURCH: A full programme of events for everyone

In 2019 the Swiss Church in London will celebrate a decade since the spectacular renovation of the Church, by the renowned Swiss architects Christ and Gantenbein. The renovation respected the 250 year-old tradition of the Swiss Church in London enabling it to continue as an active Church congregation, with French and German-speaking Church Groups, and to undertake outreach work.

The Church has also become a focal point for the Swiss Community in London. In addition it hosts a full repertoire of music and

cultural events and operates as a commercial hire venue for functions ranging from Fashion Week to banquet dinners.

In the second half of 2018 the Church held a number of very successful community events including a Swiss Family Christmas afternoon with Samichlaus on 9 December, attended by over sixty children and their parents. A lot of fun was had too, carving lanterns and making Christmas decorations. The ever popular Christmas Carol Concert, held on 16 December with music from the excellent Icona Choir, saw the Church full to the brim once again.

A full autumn programme of cultural events curated by Kirsty White attracted a lot of attention and critical acclaim, in particular Rebecca Birch's *The Yellowing Part 2, Bell Mouth*.

In 2019, as we enter our second decade in our beautiful renovated building we face a number of exciting challenges. For example, we wish to increase the number of trustees on the Church's governing board, the Consistoire. In particular, if you have legal, Company Secretarial, or Fund raising skills and are inter-



ested, please contact our Minister Carla Maurer to find out more. (carla.maurer@swisschurchlondon.org.uk). We are also looking for more volunteers to help organise and run community events. If you have ideas for new activities and events we'd love to hear from you. (info@swisschurch.org.uk, 020 7836 1418).

The Swiss Church in London wishes you all a joyful New Year.

COLIN MCINTYRE



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FOSSUK WEBSITE

You can find all the information in one place: Club info, events, ASO news, Brexit info, etc. with one click of the mouse! Go to: www.swiss-societies.co.uk



Can't find the articles & pictures you submitted to the SR? Look no further! Go to:

WWW.SWISS-SOCIETIES.CO.UK

EXHIBITIONS: Swiss art and artists in the UK

19 January – 24 March 2019

Mai-Thu Perret

‘The Blazing World’

Spike Island

BRISTOL

<http://bit.do/SCN1>



14 February 2019

Mai-Thu Perret

Christ & Ganterbein

‘Architecture on Stage’

Barbican

LONDON

<http://bit.do/SCN2>

CONSULATE OF SCOTLAND: Switzerland salutes the Air Force

The Royal Air Force centenary birthday (RAF 100) was also celebrated at the Scottish International Air Show in September this year.

To celebrate this remarkable achievement, Switzerland displayed its highly popular Swiss Air Force F/A 18 ‘Solo Swiss Hornet Display Team’ and, on the civil side, the ‘Classic Formation’ featuring a SWISS-AIR DC3 including three legacy Beechcraft airplanes. Despite the changeable weather, the Air Show drew a crowd of more than 150,000 spectators. Public diplomacy at its finest!

REPORTED BY: PETER MULLER-MCDougall HON CONSUL GENERAL, EDINBURGH

FOTOS: JAN LOCHER AND VBS SWISS ARMED FORCES



Living Well

Bereavement, Grief, Care & Coping with Loss

A Swiss Benevolent Society Seminar in
partnership with Cruse Bereavement Care.

Tuesday 12th March 2019

Free admission

Registration: 18:15

Presentation with Q&A: 18:30–19:30

Drinks Reception: 19:30–20:00

Location: Swiss Embassy London
16–18 Montagu Pl, London W1H 2BQ

RSVP: info@swissbenevolent.org.uk
before Monday 4th March

SWISS
BENEVOLENT
SOCIETY FOUNDED 1870

Cruse
Bereavement
Care

1: ABERDEEN SWISS CLUB

The club was founded in 1987. Covers the area of Aberdeenshire, Moray and Shire of Inverness. Consists of approximately 80 members. Covers an age range from 4 months old baby, over teens & twens to our honoury member in the nineties. Organises approximately six events such as: fun curling, golf, BBQ, Swiss National Anniversary, Samichlaus with fondue. These events take place all over the area. Everyone is welcome!

For further information:
mcknecht.green99@outlook.com or
jimbomoggiev8@gmail.com

The Aberdeen Swiss Club's members playing the traditional game of curling!



In September the Swiss Club Tyne Tees celebrated its 30th anniversary.



Swiss-Scottish Father Christmas in Edinburgh.



Some of the West Surrey Swiss Club's members who booked up a whole restaurant for their last gathering!



Samichlaus meeting in Bangor.



The whole group in front of the Swiss Cross.

2: SWISS CLUB TYNE TEES

30 years celebration

On Sunday, 23rd September 2018 the Swiss Club Tyne Tees met at the president's house to celebrate its 30th anniversary. It was founded by Nelly Scott-Niederberger who now lives in Cambridge. The event was well attended by many who had joined when the club was founded in 1988 as well as some more recent members. We had a great day reminiscing, enjoying English and Swiss food and completing a fun quiz on Switzerland.

3: SWISS CLUB EDINBURGH

Christmas gathering

We enjoyed a lovely time together at our Christmas party with lots of Mulled wine and good food. Santa came by and brought presents for the children, and the adults had the lucky dip surprise.

4: WEST SURREY SWISS CLUB

1st of December 2018

West Surrey Swiss Club's last of 6 functions this year was held at Kinghams Restaurant Shere to celebrate the 1st of Advent. They occupied the whole restaurant in what was a most joyous occasion.

Plans are afoot for a varied programme in 2019 during which they will celebrate their 25th Anniversary with something special.

Attached are pictures of the diners as well as one of the fabulous starters. In this case- goats cheese, figs and pecans on a bed of honey dressed salad! Delicious!

5: SOUTHERN AREA SWISS CLUB

Christmas Party

We all enjoyed a fabulous Christmas party with an excellent turnout. The food was delicious as usual and we had a fabulous choice of raffle prizes.

BERNI CURTRESS

6: NORTH WALES SWISS

We had our Samichlaus meeting in Bangor Penrallt Church and we all were full of Fondue tasted in a special way: one cheese/one avocado! We also welcomed a special guest of honour from Switzerland: Mrs Pike.

BEATRICE SCHEGEL

7: MANCHESTER SWISS CLUB

Samichlaus at the Brookdale

The appointment with Father Christmas was planned for the 2nd of December. The Party was a success! Fiftieth children arrived, the youngest one was only ten weeks old. The others soon became friends and were playing together. First, we all enjoyed the food, prepared by the committee members. Mrs Julie kindly organised games as she usually does every year. Then Father Christmas arrived after a long journey. He chatted to each child, some were told to tidy their rooms! Some children sang to Samichlaus some Carols or told him a poem. Hannah Salden beautifully played 'Edelweiss' beautifully on her flute. They were all given a small present, and it was time to go home. A big 'thank you' to the committee for organising this amazing event.

MARGRITH EASTER

NEW HELVETIC SOCIETY: L'Escalade at the iconic St Moritz Club

On Wednesday the 12th December 2018, members of the New Helvetic Society and Unione Ticinese, gathered together to celebrate the tradition of L'Escalade at the iconic St Moritz Club and Restaurant in London. Traditional Christmas drinks were held before dinner at the St Moritz Club where guests enjoyed a nice glass of Prosecco along with traditional Swiss cheese tartlets, kindly prepared and offered by master chef Armin Loetscher.

L'Escalade remains one of the most important events in the Genevan calendar, commemorating the fateful event of December 1602 when the Duke of Savoy, Charles Emmanuel, attempted to take Geneva by surprise but suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of its citizens.

For over one hundred years, Genevans and friends have commemorated L'Escalade in London. December 2018 was no exception as more than 40 people gathered at the iconic St Moritz Club and Restaurant in London with our guests of honour, Mrs Simona Regazzoni Kwenda and Mr Walter.

Mrs Simona Regazzoni Kwenda is the Head of the Consular Affairs in London. During the evening's festivities the raffle took place. The highlight of which was a leather document folder kindly donated by Daniela De Montby.

Following a delicious meal, Mr Daniel Pedroletti was invited to recall the fateful events of December 1602 and read the names of the victims. Last but not least, the event ended with the traditional smashing of the chocolate marmite (cauldron) filled with marzipan vegetables which was kindly transported from Geneva to London by Madame Paclet. Madame Anne Allen was asked to smash the marmite and did elegantly while diligently reciting 'Ainsi périrent les ennemis de la République' (Thus perish the enemies of the Republic). This refers to how Catherine Cheynel, better known as Mère Royaume, poured boiling hot vegetable soup on soldiers scaling the walls of the city.

TEXT: LOREDANA GUETG-WYATT

PHOTOS: CAMILLA GHISLANZONI



Please join the next event of the New Helvetic Society which will occur on the **21st of March** at the Swiss Embassy. The event will start with the Annual General meeting, followed by a comedy night where guests will have the opportunity to meet two amazing comedians, Julie Howe and Adam Bromley.

To get more information on the event please email: info@newhelveticsociety.org.uk



UNIONE TICINESE: Celebration party at the Swiss Embassy

The Unione Ticinese is delighted to announce the celebrations for its 145th anniversary of foundation. The event will take place at the Swiss Embassy on Saturday the 9th of February 2019 from 7pm.

We are hoping to spend a celebratory evening that will see the participation of Manuela Bechtiger and Giampiero Gianella, the president and vice-president of Pro Ticino; Bixio Caprara, member of the Gran Consiglio of Canton Ticino and the Ambassador and his wife.

The dinner and celebrations will be accompanied by live music performed by the duo (guitar and accordion) from Ticino 'Rolando e Lorenzo'. Bookings taken until 25th January. Contact Peter Barber to secure your place.

peter_barber@mac.com



