

**Zeitschrift:** Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad  
**Herausgeber:** Organisation of the Swiss Abroad  
**Band:** 49 (2022)  
**Heft:** 2

**Anhang:** Regional edition : United Kingdom & Ireland

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# REGIONAL EDITION

## UNITED KINGDOM & IRELAND

### EDITORIAL

Dear readers, we open this issue by recalling an eminent English academic who dedicated his studies and research to the Swiss Federation, identifying in our political model an interesting example for other democracies. He produced many publications, including a complete history of Switzerland which was considered so comprehensive that it has been recently translated into German.

■ *Other pages in this edition tell about two persons – belonging to the Swiss community in the UK – who have recently passed away: the famous Genevan artist John Aldus, who made of London his private and professional home, and Vreni Rudkin, the energetic and tireless founder of the Southern Area Swiss Club.*



GIOIA PALMIERI,  
«UK & IRELAND PAGES»

### UNIVERSITY: THE STUDY OF SWITZERLAND WILL BE MUCH THE POORER AFTER THE DEATH OF DR CLIVE CHURCH



Prof Clive Church died on the 15 of Dec 2021. He joined the University of Kent in 1981 as Senior Lecturer in European Studies, affiliated with the then European Studies unit in the School of European Culture and Languages. He was promoted to professor in 1992 and became a member of the Department of Politics and International Relations in 1996. Upon his retirement in 2003, he was appointed Emeritus Professor. A historian by background, Church became a leading scholar of Swiss history and politics and of European integration. He remained very much active past his retirement and was planning to write on external views of Swiss politics at the time of his death. We asked *Dr Paolo Dardanelli* (University of Kent) – who has worked with Prof Church in the last decades of his teaching – to help us to understand how deep and relevant has been his effort to let Switzerland's politics and culture be known in the UK.

*Swiss Review: Why was Prof Church considered as the leading expert of Switzerland in the UK?*

*Paolo Dardanelli:* Clive was an eminent scholar of the Swiss Federation and its history since the 90s. He was a historian by background, rather than a political scientist. So his interest in Switzerland originally came from his interest in Swiss history. As a historian initially, he didn't have a specific sort of focus when he started to research Swiss politics. Rather, he was particularly interested in the Country as a whole. This is why he began to investigate the Swiss political system and understood how relevant 'the Swiss case' was, as an example, for British and EU politics. Although Switzerland is all too often ignored in the English speaking world, it is a fascinating and important state. So, since the 1970s, Clive wrote widely on Swiss elections, Euroscepticism, history and EU relations.

*SR: What's the main contribution of Prof Church to the studies of the Swiss Federation?*

*PD:* I would say that his main contribution was, especially to make Switzerland known to the UK's public in terms of understanding its very peculiar political system. It is not easy to explain the complexity of the Swiss Federation to people who approach its culture and its politics from the outside. He co-founded the Centre for Swiss Politics which was in operation from 2003 to 2016. I think that the centre was unique, in the sense that it was the only real academic centre devoted to the study of Switzerland that, to my knowledge, existed anywhere.

*SR: Was Prof Church the first academic to take an interest in Swiss politics here in the UK?*

*PD:* He took his scientific legacy from Prof Christopher Hughes after his retirement. Before that, there had been a certain sort of decline of interest in Switzerland, especially starting from the post-war period. And, as I was saying, Church's contribution was to explain the complexities which characterise Switzerland to the British public. He published a textbook in 2004 *The Politics and Government of Switzerland* (Palgrave Macmillan), which is considered Church's main contribution in terms of academic publications. He also put together a collective volume on Switzerland and the European Union that analysed different aspects of Swiss-EU relations. And together with an American colleague, he wrote *A Concise History of Switzerland* (Cambridge University Press), which was published in 2013. This was the first history of Switzerland published in English after many decades. The volume is such an accessible overview of Swiss history that it has been translated also in German. The study of Switzerland and, more widely, of Europe, will be much the poorer without Clive.



Prof Clive Church.

## LONDON: WATCHMAKERS' FOURTH-GENERATION DEXTERITY PASSED ON THE BEST DENTAL PRACTICE IN THE UK



Dr Louis Guenin comes from the fourth generation of a Swiss family of watchmakers who moved to London at the beginning of the last

century to work for the Swiss watch industry in the British capital. Louis has brought the family's long-established dexterity through another profession where the Swiss quality is known worldwide: dental care. Mr Guenin runs the best dental practice in the country, which has been recently awarded by the Government.

*Swiss Review: Mr Guenin what has meant for you to grow up in a family of Swiss watchmakers in the UK?*

**Louis Guenin:** I come from a very strong Swiss upbringing. I belong to four generations of watchmakers both on my father's and my mother's side. Because of the unemployment crisis in Switzerland in the last century, my grandparents decided to move to London, where there was a big demand for watchmakers. So that's when both my mother's side coming from Neuchatel and my father's side originally from Geneva came over to the UK and left Switzerland. My father's family were working for Zenit watch company and my mother's for Rolex. At that time, the Swiss community was quite strong in London, and this is the reason why both my father and my mother grew up together, became friends and got married. I always remember my grandparents and

my father working at the bench, mending watches, getting new ones and so on. Eventually, my father continued to work with Zenit as a watchmaker. He worked his way up and became general manager for the UK until the present time. In the Swiss watch industry, not only the men but also the wives were involved in the company.

*SR: And how did you end up becoming a dentist?*

**LG:** Well, because of my four generations of ancestors being Swiss watchmakers, I was always told that manual dexterity was genetically passed from one generation to another. And as a child, I loved to make things and do things using my hands, but I was an excellent student at school as well. And it seemed a natural progression to become a dentist. In my family, we always had empathy for looking after people and this is what we enjoyed and developed in our lives along with our dexterity.

*SR: Where did you study dentistry?*

**LG:** It has been a dual education. I actually did my studies at the University College London, which was considered one of the best dental hospitals at that time. But I had strong links with a dental hospital in Geneva, where my cousins used to study and work. I furthered my education in the UK in parallel with the Swiss way of excellence in this field, which is known worldwide. And because communication works so well nowadays, I am still very much involved with the Swiss implant compa-

nies. When my studies were completed, I had two options: either to study and practice dentistry in Geneva with my cousins or to stay here if any good opportunity would come up in London. And I was asked to join one of the best practices in the country, so I decided to stay here and I've never looked back.

*SR: Your dental practice has won several awards. Why?*

**LG:** I am a senior partner of a practice called Holford Partners, which also has links with a Swiss dental company called Curaden. The Practice has been voted by the Government as the best in the country. This is because we give the highest dentistry quality that a patient can get in the UK according to Swiss standards. We are especially proud of the empathy we have toward the patient: it can be a very distressing time for a person with complicated dental work to be done. It means that when patients come to see us, they are not just a number: we look after their dental and mental health. Ours is the longest established dental practice in the country, starting in the 1860s. Three generations of the Holford family have led the dental practice: from the grandfather to the son and the grandson. I joined the practice in the 70s and I brought the Swiss dentistry quality into the service, which is what made us such a very recognised dental practice in the country.

*SR: Do you have many Swiss clients?*

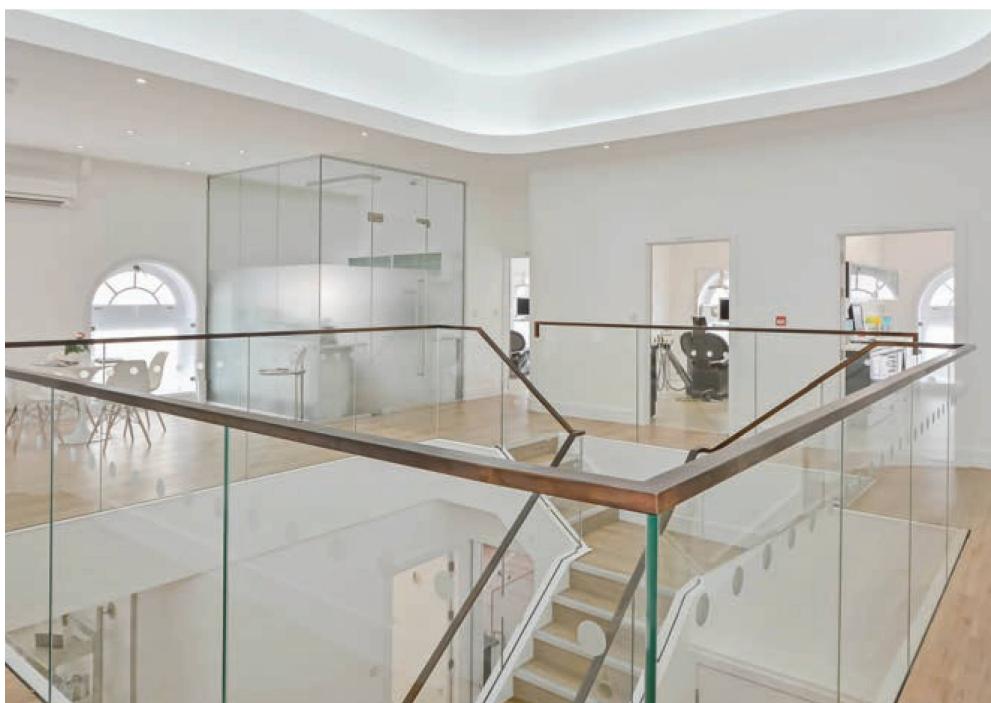
**LG:** Of course, the Swiss community in London is very appreciative of our service. They can get very Swiss high standard dental care along with somebody that they can trust and rely on.

*SR: And what about the Guenin's fourth generation?*

**LG:** I am a father of four and I'm very happy to say that two of my sons are involved in the same profession: my daughter is a hygienist; one of my sons is also a dentist and has worked with me for the last 11 years. I have another son who works in the office and organises everything. Having two sons working in our practice makes me a very proud father. It is a great blessing to have my family around and their support.

GIOIA PALMIERI

For more information about the dental practice, please visit the website: [holfordcuraden.com](http://holfordcuraden.com)



## JOHN ALDUS: SCULPTOR, PAINTER AND MULTIMEDIA ARTIST WHO HAS MADE LONDON HIS HOUSE

The city of Geneva owes him one of the most emblematic works of public art in the city centre. For forty years, four very realistic bronze men and two women have joined the passers-by on the Plainpalais roundabout – under the metal features appear the writer Michel Butor or the collector André L'Huillier.

Baptised 'Alter ego' and winner of a competition organised by the city during the redevelopment of the crossroads, this quartet of statues was created by the Geneva sculptor Gérald Ducimetière. The man – who took the name of John Aldus before going to England in 1996 – died on January 26 in London at the age of 81.

A graduate of Decorative Arts at the Geneva School of Fine Arts, Ducimetière had his first personal exhibition at the Rath Museum in 1965, where he showed paintings and drawings. But his practice quickly extended to engraving, photography, video, installation or performance. He was engaged in examining the role of art and its mechanisms in contemporary society.

In 1994, the Geneva artist opted for a radical change of life, to 'turn the page on the Ducimetière', he changed his birth name, Gérald John Ducimetière, to John Aldus. 'Ducimetière' means 'of the cemetery' in French. Adopting his middle name and playing on the end of 'Gérald' and the beginning of 'Ducimetière', he became John Aldus and took French nationality. He settled in London the following year, maintaining only rather ties with his native town.

The Guardian has recently paid him tribute by remembering his London's artworks: 'The works Aldus made in London were as thoughtful, and thought-provoking, as his Swiss work had been. His light sculpture, Lykeios (2000),



Photographic credit:  
Francesco Cincotta.

punned in French and classical Greek. The building in whose turrets the piece was installed was called the Lycée, the word deriving from the Athenian temple of Apollo Lykeios where Aristotle had taught. Aldus's British masterpiece, Tokens (2006), commissioned by Camden council, saw him embedding copies of the fragments attached as identifiers by 18th-century mothers to the clothes of the babies they abandoned at London's Foundling hospital into the pavement of nearby Marchmont Street. As often in Aldus's work, the experience of space in the piece becomes an experience of time. Tokens also recalled the artist's own, more fortunate birth. "I had nine months in my mother's womb and I became an artist," Aldus said. "That's all."

He has worked as an architectural draughtsman, graphic designer, and theatre and film stage designer as well as teaching (eg invited professor at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne in 1985).

'As to his own displacement, moving to London made him happy. Living and working in a studio in Hampstead, Aldus drove most days to an arts club in Chelsea where, book in hand, he would sit by himself, bespectacled and lost in thought'.



Aldus's graphic design work.  
Below: Aldus's Alter Ego figures in Geneva;  
Marchmont Street Token Sculptures.  
Photograph: johnaldus.com



## REMEMBER: VRENI RUDKIN, THE FOUNDER OF THE SOUTHERN AREA SWISS CLUB

It is with great sadness that we have to let you know that Vreni Rudkin passed away peacefully on 28th January at the Hill House Nursing Home in Eweshot, aged 83. We fondly remember Vreni, an enthusiastic and active 'girl from Bern', in her various roles in the Southern Area Swiss Club. She was a founder member in 1978, then our club secretary and finally a dedicated president (after Marcel and before Berni) for many years until 2012. Heidi Williamson (also a founder member) wrote the following tribute which was read out at the funeral.

Some of you might know the story of how our club got started: On the occasion of our Silver Anniversary, Vreni wrote for the Swiss Review: 'It all started with a spot of knitting. Once upon a time in 1978, there was a lady called Anne who was travelling by coach from Farnborough, Hampshire to London. It was a boring journey, so she got out her knitting and concentrated on that. There was a second young lady on the coach, Elsa, who had been taught the same non-English way to knit, namely forward and fast and in another language. They began to talk, became friends in this wonderful country where everything was so different, including knitting. Soon afterwards Elsa met Vreni and Heidi – the outcome had to be a little Swiss club.'



Vreni Rudkin has always been an active 'girl' from Bern.

The Venues she arranged were: Oak Farm, Elles Hall, St. Peter's Church Hall, Darby Green Hall. In her 5 ring binder diaries, we can read that she facilitated visitors from the Swiss Embassy in London. Representatives, consuls and even the Ambassador came (sometimes with Swiss wine) to talk about their jobs, show us pictures of their previous postings, give advice on dual citizenship, voting, as well as information about the umbrella organisation FOSSUK.

Vreni recognised that our club should be useful as well as fun. Then, thanks to Vreni we also had talks by 'home-grown experts' about catering on Concorde, flower arranging, Scherenschnitt, philately, winemaking, tatting, photography and more. Not to mention that Tramps' supper was one of her favourite evenings, dressing up with a snazzy hat and shabby trousers and eating fish and chips.

Vreni wrote a comprehensive list of all the outings over the years. The members will remember Exbury Gardens, Leeds Castle, Arundel, Bluebell Railway, Marwell Zoo, Kew Gardens, Waddensdon Manor, river trips, family walks, game evenings, picnics and many more. Many of Vreni's favourite items are still in the Programme: Skittles, January lunches, Gschwellti und Käs. This was to replace the 8 years of Fondues and 10 years of Raclettes, which much to her chagrin we had to give up because of 'Health and Safety' regulations.

But best of all were the Christmas parties, with Vreni making sure the children and adults were having a good time in the beautifully decorated hall with trees and candles, not forgetting the feast of seasonal traditional food and Gutzli.

Vreni also gave us a treat of a real-life magician. The most patriotic event was always the 1st of August celebration with gratefully accepted venues from members in Ash, Bentley, Elsted, Farnham, Headley Down and Seale. Vreni organised flags and lampions and made sure we were able to sing Swiss songs around the bonfire. Much to her delight three times, there was even alphorn entertainment. Our club continues still as a result of its strong foundations which Vreni helped to build and of which she was rightly proud. *Vreni, we miss you.*

HEIDI WILLIAMSON AND SOUTHERN AREA SWISS CLUB

For more information about our club please contact  
Bernadette Curtress: [berni@nbtsc.plus.com](mailto:berni@nbtsc.plus.com)



Southern Area Swiss Club met for an informal social afternoon on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> February.

Vreni was an active and energetic member, then secretary and eventually president of the club from 1984 to 2012. Her pride in her heritage showed clearly in the strong thread of 'Swissness' she maintained in all our events from National Days and Stubehöcks to the personalised Programmes she created for us each year. Her good influence on us all and our activities has been clear and inspirational. It isn't easy to summarise all these activities over more than 40 years. But true to her admin abilities as a Junior School secretary in Cove, Vreni maintained colourful club diaries and she kept meticulous statistics. Under her management Membership numbers rose from 19 to 50 over the years. Her diary records show that subs started at 50p and are now £8 per annum.

## UNIONE TICINESE: THE CLUB'S FIRST LIVE TOAST WITH MERLOT WINE AFTER 18 MONTHS

On 6 November 2021 the Unione Ticinese was able to hold its first live event in 18 months when, by the kind permission of Ambassador Leitner, it held its traditional Castagnata in the Embassy canteen.

Numbers were restricted to 30 because of Covid regulations and we had a waiting list. In addition to plentiful chestnuts, there were select cold meats, delicious torta di pane and plentiful wine, including Merlot del Ticino – and the traditional raffle. A good time seems to have been had by all. We hope we'll be able to live Castagnata next year – and on a larger scale!!

By the time February – and the obligatory celebration of our foundation on 8 February 1874 – came, the country was back near-lockdown caused by the omicron variant of Covid. Nevertheless, we had a very successful online event, with more than 60 participants from throughout the world. We screened the

prize-winning new Ticinese documentary 'Un Posto per la Vita' which in part documented the integration into Ticinese life of an Argentinian and of a Somali refugee. It was preceded by short speeches by Mr Leitner, our Honorary President, who proposed a toast to the health of the Unione Ticinese, by Manuela Berchtiger, the vice-President of the umbrella group, Pro Ticino, to which the Unione Ticinese is affiliated, and by Loredana Guetg-Wyatt of FOSSUK. Afterwards, there was a question and answer session with the producers of the film. The event was free, but viewers were encouraged to make a donation to the Ticinese food bank, 'Il Tavolino Magico' and nearly £200 was raised.

The Unione Ticinese's next event will be its Annual General Meeting on 26 March. It will be a hybrid event, which we hope will be combined with a cultural event and a reception.



Traditional 'ticinese castagnata' at the Embassy canteen.

## CONCERT: THE SWISS NATIONAL YOUTH ACCORDION ORCHESTRA PERFORMS IN LONDON



The Swiss National Youth Accordion Orchestra consists of accordionists from all over Switzerland who like to be challenged and encouraged.

Once or twice a year, an exciting project is organised in which the young members can participate. In addition to musical development, the projects also serve to establish contacts and friendships with like-minded people from the scene. A lively bunch that pursues a common goal with a lot of passion and drive: to make the accordion popular and to make good music together.

Location: Sacred Heart Church, Wimbledon.

Date: Mon 18 Apr 5:00pm

Tickets: [ticketsource.co.uk/londonao](https://ticketsource.co.uk/londonao)

JAO Homepage: [joa-oja.ch](http://joa-oja.ch)

## EMBASSY NEWS: MESSAGE FROM THE REGIONAL CONSULAR CENTRE LONDON

Would you like to contact the Regional Consular Centre conveniently and at any time? The online desk for Swiss nationals living abroad makes this possible. You can get answers to questions regarding your long-term stay abroad through the online desk, and you can view your personal details, announce a change of address or civil status, register to vote in Switzerland, etc.

For more information and to register please visit:

[www.eda.admin.ch/countries/united-kingdom/en/home/services/online-desk.html](https://www.eda.admin.ch/countries/united-kingdom/en/home/services/online-desk.html)

Don't have access to the internet? It is important that you inform us about any changes to your records. You can do so by post to: Regional Consular Centre London Embassy of Switzerland 16–18 Montagu Place, London W1H 2BQ



**WEDDING?**  
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#### INFORMATION

Obituaries of Swiss citizens living in the UK recently passed away will be regularly published in the last issue of the Swiss Review. Please send an email to [editor@swissreview.co.uk](mailto:editor@swissreview.co.uk) with all the information.

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## POP ARTISTS: ALESSIA & THE CRAZycats ON TOUR AROUND EUROPE

Alessia is a pop artist originally from Switzerland based in London, England. Taking inspiration from the melodies of funk pioneers such as James Brown and George Clinton, Alessia combines 80's synths and style with more contemporary elements and relatable, empowering lyricism.

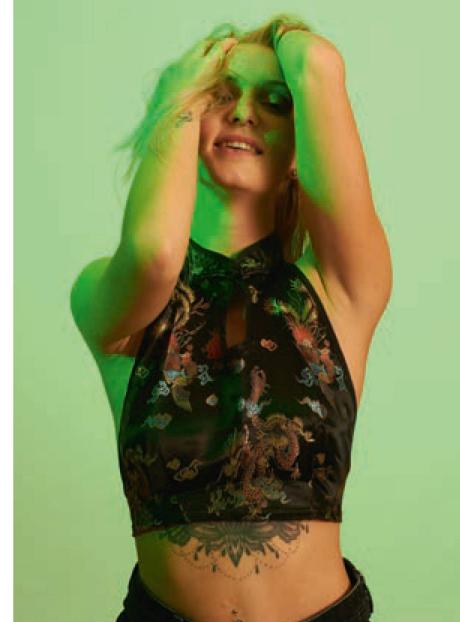
Beginning with her 2019 single 'Butterfly', Alessia has released a series of singles as a solo artist, as well as collaborating with a variety of other artist including Seven Seers, Salah Zhouri, Jazz Lingard, Najs, Jul Cebury and Joeulis.

Alessia's debut EP 'Sugar' was released in

November 2021 and saw her open up her heart to her fans. Each song allows Alessia to direct her creative lens toward distinct sides of love, creating a cathartic atmosphere of liberated and unbridled fulfilment.

Little Alessia, at age of 5 she has started playing the classical piano in Switzerland, Weggis. In her teenage years she did the Jazz Pre College at the HSLU on piano where she then further decided she wants to make her own music forever.

In the past Year 2021 in the summer time Alessia and her Band went on their first tour in



Switzerland where they played in her home-town and the Hard Rock Hotel in Davos.

From June to August, Alessia & The Crazy-Cats are going to travel and perform around Europe. The whole band is graduating at BIMM University in London May 2022 where they have made friends from all over the world. They are going to use their contacts to get to play all over Europe for 3 month.



Whoever is planning an Event or a Party and is looking for a upbeat and positive Vibes band get in touch with Alessia & the CrazyCats:  
[booking@alessiaartist.com](mailto:booking@alessiaartist.com)

## SWISS CHURCH LONDON: SPRING PROGRAM AND A CALL FOR DONATIONS TO REPAINT THE STRUCTURE

Spring is here, the tulips and daffodils are in bloom. We are holding Sunday Services, and the church is filled with organ music and chatter once again. Music events have returned.

A recent highlight was Fiona Brice's concert on International Piano Day, and on 27 April the renowned Basel Boys' Choir will visit us. Church groups are back, outreach work is being done. We are pleased to see the church beginning to be used every day, as we adapt 'to living with Covid-19'.

For the last two years we needed to put many things on hold. We have a 10-year plan in place. But, as we open the doors at Endell Street to daily use once again, it is clear that we need to repaint the interior and exterior of the church. This is something we had to defer during Covid-19. The Swiss Church is a listed building, which adds to the costs.

We are justly proud of our stark white interior, but it is an uphill task to keep everything looking pristine. Painting the church hall and foyer costs £20,000 alone. And so, we are asking for your support. Secure online donations can be made via our website. There is also further information there about other ways of supporting the Swiss Church.

We are also looking for more trustee directors for the Swiss Church. Could you help us? You could bring valuable skills and knowledge, which will help the Swiss Church over the coming years. Please contact me for more details.

COLIN MCINTYRE – CONSISTOIRE TRUSTEE SWISS CHURCH IN LONDON



# CULTURAL NEWS



## SWISS CLUB IRELAND: APPEAL

Our first event in 2022 is an outing to the watch the Swiss Film 'Olga' on Sunday 27 February at 6pm in the Light House Cinema.

The film is shown as part of the Virgin Media Dublin International Film Festival. The Club is urgently looking for committee members (and general members) since some people moved away during the pandemic. Unfortunately, the club's president and the secretary have very restricted time to spend in renewing the association's program. Thank you!

NICOLE MICHEL, PRESIDENT

For those interested to get in touch with us, please write to  
[swissclubireland@hotmail.com](mailto:swissclubireland@hotmail.com)  
[swissclubireland.ie](http://swissclubireland.ie)

## Saype

Guillaume Legros alias Saype (a contraction of Say Peace) creates monumental frescoes on grass and on the ground. His next fresco will be in Belfast from mid-June to the end of July. 'Beyond Walls' is a message of kindness and optimism, expressed by symbolically creating the biggest human chain ever made. The project started in Paris in front of the Eiffel Tower and aims to cross five continents, including at least 30 cities across the globe. Saype has created his own eco-responsible paint composed mainly of chalk and charcoal. His poetic, ephemeral works travel around the world to impact upon attitudes, centring on respect for nature and a call for unity.



## IMPRESSUM

HOW TO CONTACT THE EDITOR: Reports of Swiss society activities, news, coming events, correspondence, articles and advertising for the 'Switzerland in the UK & Ireland' section of the Swiss Review, should go to the editor: GIOIA PALMIERI  
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DESIGN:  
Implemented by Marc Peter – on-IDLE Ltd  
[www.on-idle.com](http://www.on-idle.com)

The deadline for the next UK issue is: 31.05.2022  
Date of publication: 01.07.2022

## Next Issues

The Swiss Review is published six times a year. Its 'Switzerland in the UK & Ireland' supplement is out four times a year: February, April, June and October.