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REGIONAL EDITION

UNITED KINGDOM | IRELAND

Editorial

Dear readers, you will not find a regional section in the next issue (July 2024), but you will find a questionnaire: you are invited to take part in the comprehensive readership survey of Swiss Review. By doing so, you will help shape the future of the magazine. What does Swiss Review need to offer to appeal to readers? Which topics are of particular interest and reach you? What do you find redundant or even annoying? These and many other questions are put to you. The feedback from readers will be used to check the focus

of the magazine and correct it if necessary. The upcoming readership survey is also important from the point of view of our regional editorial team UK/Ireland. The last survey in 2020, for example, showed that the regional pages are generally very well-read. This support proved to be very important. We hope to receive feedback from you again, both on the magazine as a whole and on the regional pages. Readers can participate in the survey online – we recommend completing it online for our convenience – or by filling out a paper questionnaire. Thank you!



GIOIA PALMIERI,
«UK & IRELAND PAGES»

Swiss Abroad Congress:

Strengthening global connections and representation

On March 15, 2024, the Spring session of the Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Bern saw notable attendance from UK Delegates Loredana Guetg Wyatt, Franz Muheim, Lakshmi Sundaram, and Andreas Feller-Ryf. OSA President Filippo Lombardi discussed recent elections favouring the 13th pension. He emphasized the importance of maintaining a positive image for Swiss abroad, highlighting their global influence and contributions.

Madame Estelle Revaz, Geneva SP National Councillor, a professional cellist, joined the OSA council. An informative

session with the Department of Foreign Affairs discussed budget cuts necessitated by recent expenditures. Initiatives targeting different demographics of Swiss expatriates were discussed, including support for the ageing population and aiding transitions between working abroad and returning to Switzerland.

The importance of utilizing tools like the TravelAdmin and SwissInTouch apps was highlighted by Mr. Michele Malizia. Vision 2035 aims to outline budgetary priorities for the next decade. The OSA's working groups presented their initiatives. The group run by

Andreas Feller-Ryf on direct voting of OSA representatives collaborates with the DFAE. President Lombardi reassured OSA delegates are voted in democratically with room for improvement. Delegate Franz Muheim reminded participants to ensure candidates are enrolled in the electoral role.

The working group on Swiss representation at the National Council, led by former UK delegate Vincent Croiset, presented findings. Despite Article 8 promising equality, challenges persist in fair representation for Swiss abroad. The group advocates for models seen in France, Italy, and Portugal.

Loredana Guetg-Wyatt and Lakshmi Sundaram presented FOSSUK, discussing challenges in supporting Swiss citizens abroad. In conclusion, the Spring session of the Congress of the Swiss highlighted ongoing efforts to strengthen the representation and support of Swiss citizens living abroad.

LOREDANA GUETG-WYATT

OSA DELEGATE AND PRESIDENT OF FOSSUK



UK delegates: Lakshmi Sundaram, Andreas Feller-Ryf, Loredana Guetg-Wyatt and Franz Muheim.

New OSA delegates elections: Exploring new electoral paths and community engagement

At the recent OSA congress, discussions were raised regarding a significant shift in the electoral process for OSA delegates. The election of new UK representatives at the Parliament of the Swiss Abroad will be held next year in Springtime. Currently, in the UK there is a hybrid solution whereby three delegates are directly elected and two are voted in by the corporate members of FOSSUK. The latter must be equal members of a Swiss club in the UK that pays membership fees to FOSSUK to be voted. This is a system challenged by several key issues.

Primarily, Swiss clubs grapple with recruitment hurdles and the scarcity of members willing to pursue candidacy. This procedure raises concerns among diverse demographics, particularly the youth, advocating for more inclusive participation in the vote. Additionally, as Swiss clubs in the UK diminish in number as they struggle to recruit new members, doubts arise regarding the usefulness of leaving such a significant voting authority within these entities. In light of these discussions, we turn to **Loredana Guetg-Wyatt** – a UK delegate at OSA twice, currently holds the position of FOSSUK president for the second time and previous president of the Swiss club New Helvetic Society – for insights into the implications and potential transformations looming over the electoral landscape.

SR: At the last congress, there was a discussion about the possibility of direct elections for the representatives of the UK at the OSA Parliament. What's your perspective on this proposal? How do you think direct elections would impact representation and engagement among Swiss expatriates in the UK?

LGW: My perspective is that it is time to reconsider and discuss how the elections of UK delegates are conducted and whether the current procedures reflect the changes in the Swiss demographic in this country. I am in favour of direct elections of the UK delegates. However, this decision needs to be deliberated and approved by the majority of the



Loredana Guetg-Wyatt and Mr Filippo Lombardi, OSA President.

corporate members belonging to FOSSUK. Urgently, we need to assess whether the current election model aligns with the evolving demographic of Swiss residents in the UK. Clubs are struggling to attract new members and moreover, those that join, may only stay for a year or two, therefore limiting opportunities for new candidates to emerge. Furthermore, the number of Swiss clubs in the country has significantly declined in recent years, leaving a small group to represent the needs of FOSSUK and thus of the Swiss abroad in the United Kingdom. Can we realistically expect only a few representatives to adequately represent the entire voting community? While Swiss people still desire to gather and celebrate their roots and culture, there is a shift in how they prefer to do so. It seems that traditional clubs, as they are currently structured, are not the most effective means of bringing people together, especially for young individuals. We should voice this need and work together to explore the most effective ways to facilitate community gatherings and cultural celebrations.

GIOIA PALMIERI

Would you like to join the discussion regarding how the elections would be held? Please write to enquiries@swiss-societies.co.uk and share your opinion.

London: UK Delegate Andreas Feller-Rys leaves an enduring impact upon departure

Andreas bids farewell to London, returning to Switzerland. He has been integral to the Swiss community since he moved to the UK. Notably, Andreas has been elected as a UK delegate to the Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA) since 2021, playing a crucial role in representing the interests of Swiss nationals living abroad. He will continue to hold this position until the next UK delegate elections in 2025.

Andreas also led the Breakfast on the Steps for the Swiss Church for three years, revitalizing the initiative with his hospitality background. He has been the driving force behind the successful Swiss National Day celebrations in London for the past two years, uniting the community and showcasing Swiss culture. As he embarks on this new chapter, we extend our heartfelt thanks to Andreas for everything he has done, and we wish him the very best.



100th Congress of the Swiss Abroad: Celebrations in Brunnen with the expat community and emerging artists

The beautiful 'Place of the Swiss Abroad' in Brunnen belongs to the over 800,000 Swiss living abroad and symbolizes their connection with their home country. The place marks the final section of the 'Swiss path,' a hiking path around Lake Uri, where every canton is represented by a stretch of the track, established for the 700th anniversary of the Swiss Confederation in 1991.

The foundation 'Auslandsschweizerplatz Brunnen' is the owner of the place. The federal government, the Canton Schwyz, the community of Ingenbohl-Brunnen, the Schwyzer Kantonallbank, as well as the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA), all provide members to the foundation board. If you get a chance to visit Brunnen, the 'Place of the Swiss Abroad' on the shore of Lake Lucerne (the lake of the four cantons) is well worth visiting, with a beautiful view over the lake, the Rütli, which is the birthplace of Switzerland, and the mountains in central Switzerland.

At the Swiss Abroad Congress in St. Gallen in August 2023, the foundation launched the third 'artist in residence' project, aiming to facilitate contact between Swiss Abroad artists and local Swiss residents. This time, the call was made for a wide variety of art forms, and young Swiss artists living abroad were strongly encouraged to apply. The award for the winning Swiss artist living abroad is a stipend to work in Brunnen using local facilities such as an atelier, an art gallery, or equivalent. Their stay could also feature events, e.g., at the 'Place of the Swiss Abroad'.

The jury, comprising Norbert Mettler (chair and former vice-president of the foundation), Silvia Schranz (president of Kultur Brunnen), Alex Hauenstein (president of the foundation), David



Clavadetscher (director of Spettacolo), and Alvaro Schoeck (regisseur), chose Nat Cartier – a performance artist, producer, and songwriter living in Edinburgh – from the field of applicants as the winner of the stipend award. Nat is already a well-known musician in the United Kingdom with successful projects to his name. He is underway in several modern genres of music, which he calls Neo.

The 100th congress of the OSA will take place in Lucerne from the 11th to the 13th of July. There will be a boat trip from Lucerne to Brunnen where delegates will have the opportunity to meet on the square dedicated to the Swiss abroad. A vernissage will take place in Brunnen in conjunction with the 100th Congress. For this occasion, OSA has launched a new campaign aimed at raising funds for the organisation. Info: [swisscommunity.com](https://www.swisscommunity.com)

FRANZ MUHEIM, MEMBER OF THE OSA EXECUTIVE BOARD
AND MEMBER OF THE BOARD FOR THE 'PLACE OF THE SWISS ABROAD'

'Artists in residence' project: Blending Swiss traditions with artistic pursuits

Nat Cartier, the musician and songwriter selected for the 'Artist in Residence' project, discusses his upcoming residency in Brunnen, aiming to blend Swiss traditions with his art.

SR: Can you share your background as a performer, producer, and songwriter, and how it influenced your decision to apply for the residency?

NC: I began piano and saxophone at age 5, later joining Swiss youth orchestras. High school marked my song writing debut, flourishing

in Edinburgh. Identifying as Swiss significantly shaped my career, inspiring my application. Emigrating while maintaining a connection fuelled my aspiration for international success.

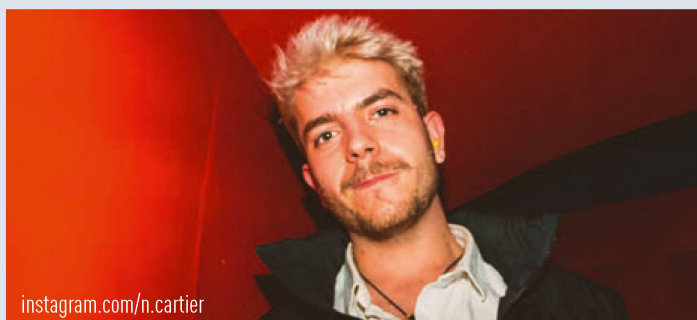
SR: How will you spend your time in Brunnen and weave Swiss experiences into your art?

NC: I'll immerse in creation during the five-week residency from July 10th to August 18 – networking and collaborating with local artists. Infusing Swiss traditional music, even with a yodel club, I'll channel Brunnen's essence through painting, photography, and poetry.

SR: With your diverse background and aim to collaborate with Swiss artists, are there themes you're excited to explore?

NC: I'm eager to develop 'Neo' music, an organic, narrative-driven genre. I'll integrate painting, photography, and poetry, inspired by Brunnen's canals. The challenge lies in seamlessly intertwining these elements, infusing Swiss traditions. The absence of genre requirements offers room for creative exploration and community engagement.

GIOIA PALMIERI



[instagram.com/n.cartier](https://www.instagram.com/n.cartier)

Exploring emigration and womanhood: The Unione Ticinese's 150th-anniversary play takes the stage

Unione Ticinese (UT), a historic Swiss society in London marking its 150th anniversary, is commissioning a new play (see issue 2/2024). Written, produced, and performed by Swiss Italian artists based in London and Ticino, the production explores emigration and womanhood themes, fostering connections between Swiss and international communities. Selected from 11 submissions in an open call competition, 'Valchera's' by *Lea Ferrari* (Ticino) won the commission. Inspired by her great-grandparents' migration from Ticino to Paris, Ferrari delves into the female perspective of emigration, addressing timeless struggles and existential questions. Initially in Italian with an English translation, the play features London-based Ticinese actors *Martina Greenwood* and *Nabila Dolfini*, who we interview, performing in the play and looking after the production. The play is directed by *Alan Alpenfelt*, with dramaturg *Matteo Luoni*. A partnership with The Cockpit Theatre in London sees the production staged in October, right after the 'Settimana della Lingua Italiana nel Mondo'. Plans include performances in Ticino, London, and other Swiss cities.

SR: What motivated you to choose the themes of emigration and womanhood for this play, and how do you envision these themes resonating with the audience?

Nabila and Martina: The intention with our callout was to reflect on emigration, inviting playwrights to explore it however they wished: through a story based on historical facts or a completely fictional, personal, magical, based on folklore, or utopian world – and we were met with extraordinary proposals. We loved 'Valchera's' because it presented a singular view on emigration seen from the perspective of women whilst offering a window into a unique corner of Switzerland. Lea cleverly weaves several themes into the play; we hope the audience will find more than one answer and, hopefully, more questions will arise.

SR: As actors, what unique perspectives or insights do you bring to portraying the characters in 'Valchera's,' especially considering the historical and cultural context of emigration from Ticino?



Actors Nabila Dolfini and Martina Greenwood.



A historical picture of Valchera's in Richmond.

Nabila: Emigrating over 100 years ago was a completely different experience than mine, and the character of Iride will need to flourish through a thorough understanding and physical embodiment of those times as much as my indelible Ticinese essence.

Martina: I'm finding those elements that are similar between myself, Tina, and my friendship with Nabila/Iride – there's a parallel real-life story happening as we create this play that I think will enrich 'Valchera's' even more. And I welcome and throw myself into all that is different, which will no doubt stretch me in more than one direction.

SR: How do you see this production contributing to the broader goals of strengthening connections between the Italian-speaking region of Switzerland, its artists, and the international community in London?

Nabila and Martina: 'Valchera's' tells a unique and untold story about the often unknown Italian-speaking region of Switzerland. We want to offer a reflection on emigration, illustrating how this universal phenomenon influences society and how it impacts individuals. Often, understanding ourselves comes from understanding others. Sharing this project with an international audience could be an enriching reflection towards our roots, our ancestors, and future generations.

GIOIA PALMIERI

London: The Cockpit Theatre schedule for 'Valchera's'

Wed 30th Oct: Evening performance at 7:30 pm

Thu 31st Oct: Matinée performance at 1:30 pm & Evening performance at 7:30 pm

Fri 1st Nov: Evening performance at 7:30 pm

Sat 2nd Nov: Matinée performance at 1:30 pm & Evening performance at 7:30 pm

'Valchera's' written by **Lea Ferrari** and produced by:

Martina Greenwood: Actor; Info: linktr.ee/tinaagreenwi

Nabila Dolfini: Actor; Info: linktr.ee/nabiladolfini

Emilie Martinoni Hoogenboom: President of Unione Ticinese

Loredana Guetg-Wyatt: President of FOSSUK

London: After 11 years of transformative leadership, Reverend Carla departs the Swiss Church

As Carla prepares to depart the Swiss Church in London after an impactful 11-year tenure, the community reflects on her transformative leadership and the remarkable evolution of this historic institution.

When Carla first arrived in 2013, the Swiss Church was at a crossroads, struggling to remain relevant. Carla recognized the need for bold change and reimagined the church's role within London's diverse communities. Under her stewardship, the Swiss Church underwent a remarkable

transformation, blending its 250-year-old architectural splendour with a modernist aesthetic to create a captivating space serving as both a sanctuary and an arts hub.

Carla's vision for inclusivity and social justice permeated the church's evolution. She extended the marriage license to include same-sex couples and cultivated a talented team of volunteers committed to the church's growing outreach initiatives. Carla's leadership fostered a strong sense of community and collab-

oration, empowering her team to pursue their visions and attract young professionals and artists.

Despite the challenges of navigating the church's transition to independence, Carla's unwavering commitment to the mission never wavered. As she prepares to embark on her next chapter, the Swiss Church stands as a testament to her transformative leadership, inspiring others to reimagine the role of religious institutions in the 21st century.

DANIEL EVERETT; PRESIDENT OF THE
SWISS CHURCH CONSISTOIRE



Updates: Honouring departing leaders and dedicated volunteers



Farewell Reverend Carla Maurer

After 11 years of service at the Swiss Church, Reverend Carla Maurer will move on from her position to move back to Switzerland with her family. She will take a new position as Minister in the Reformed Church of Sihltal, Adliswil, outside of Zurich. Carla says: 'I will

be part of the onward journey from afar, continuing to take an interest in our London church that means so much to me and has profoundly shaped me as a Minister, Christian and human being. I believe that when things are looking bright and hopeful, it is the right time to step back for a new team of people to take the lead.' Organist Peter Yardley-Jones, who knew Carla from the very start, says: 'Under Carla's leadership and direction, she has been able to pivot and steer the Swiss Church to financial independence. She has propelled the Swiss Church into being an ecumenical place of worship and cultural hub, truly adding the Swiss Church to the cultural map in London. One cannot underestimate the huge task this must have been, but one that she grasped and leaves a lasting legacy for the continuation of the church.' The Swiss Church would

like to thank Carla for her dedication, vision and energy over the years and wishes her and her family all the best for the future.

Andreas Feller-Rys, leading Breakfast on the Steps for three years, heads back to Switzerland. He revived the weekly breakfast for the homeless, professionalising the service with his background in hospitality. The Swiss Church is incredibly grateful to Andreas for everything he has done to relieve the suffering of the most vulnerable in London's streets.

Join the Swiss Church's new house choir!

The Swiss Church London Choir has been formed to enhance worship during services and sings an anthem and sometimes an introit on the first Sunday of the month. We are supported by members of the superb Holborn Chamber Choir and we have 12 to 16 singers per service. The choir performs a wide range of choral music including Victoria, Bach, Mozart, Fauré and Rutter and rehearses usually on the two Thursdays before the service from 6.30pm to 7.00pm. We occasionally rehearse on Mondays. If you enjoy singing, can read music and are an enthusiastic team player with a voice that blends, please contact our Choir Director Yang Ooi on choirdirector@swisschurchlondon.org.uk for a simple audition. We currently have vacancies in all voice parts.

SWISSCHURCHLONDON.ORG.UK

Upcoming events at the Swiss Church:

Exhibition by University of the Arts LCC MA Sound Art students
17–21 July 2024

Performance exhibition by 2024 Community Artists in Residence
Amanda Camenisch & Therese Westin
27 & 28 July 2024 (evening performance time TBC)

2024 Ballet Gala hosted by Ruth Gordon
7th September (time TBC)

Our forthcoming October 2024 issue will showcase an interview with **Reverend Carla** as she reflects on her 11-year journey in London and offers insights into her future endeavours.

The UK ETA is coming: What Swiss citizens need to know

The UK has launched its new Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) scheme, starting with the Gulf States and Jordan. The scheme is set to be extended to include all those who do not currently need a visa to visit or transit through the UK. There will be plenty of announcements from the Home Office and the airlines ahead of the introduction of the scheme to European countries, including Switzerland, possibly in the second half of 2024.

More details: gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-an-electronic-travel-authorisation-eta

What can Swiss citizens in the UK do to get ready?

- + If you hold **settled or pre-settled status** under the EU Settlement Scheme, keep your UK Visa and Immigration account (gov.uk/update-uk-visas-immigration-account-details) up to date and upload all your valid Swiss identity documents that you use for travel. This will be particularly important for travelling to the UK once the ETA scheme applies to Swiss citizens too.
- + If you currently hold **Indefinite Leave to Enter or Remain (ILR)** status obtained before Brexit please see Question 9 in the Embassy's Brexit FAQ (eda.admin.ch/london/brexit) for information on what you can do to have your immigration status electronically recorded, for example by applying for a Biometric Residence Permit.
- + If you are a **Swiss-UK dual citizen**, you are advised to enter the UK on a British passport.



FOSSUK: AGM and congress of the Swiss in UK held in May

The London Congress of the Swiss Abroad and Cultural Weekend, held on May 10th–11th, celebrated the UT 150th anniversary. Attendees enjoyed performances by the Ticino Choir, historic dining at Champagne Charlies, and discussions on Swiss citizens' issues in the UK. More info: swiss-societies.co.uk.



UT 150: Pro-Ticino Delegates Assembly in London

The Voce del Brenno concert occurred on Friday, May 10th at 7 pm at the Swiss Church.

Additionally, the Pro Ticino Delegates' Assembly took place on Saturday, May 11th at 2 pm, followed by a dinner cruise on the Thames and a social program on Sunday morning. Readers can look forward to a detailed report on these events in the upcoming October issue of the magazine. For more information, visit utlondon.org.

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To get informed about the latest from the Swiss clubs and community living in the UK and to get in touch with the UK OSA delegates, please visit the website swiss-societies.co.uk/ and FOSSUK's social media:

Facebook: @ukswiss
 Twitter: @FOSSUK

1: Swiss Club Manchester's annual raclette – a cheesy success!

Sunday the 24th of March, the Swiss Club Manchester gathered at the picturesque Brookdale Club in Bramhall for our much-anticipated annual raclette event.

With a turnout of 60 enthusiastic members, the evening was an undeniable success, filled with laughter, camaraderie, and, of course, delicious raclette. From savouring the melted cheese to sharing stories, every moment was cherished and enjoyed by all who attended. We look forward to many more memorable gatherings in the future.

Upcoming events:

Thu, 23.5.2024: Coffee Morning at Wilmslow Garden Centre

Sat, 27.7.2024: Swiss National Day Party at Brookdale Club

Thu, 10.10.2024: Coffee Morning at Wilmslow Garden Centre

For more information, please contact laure.pasteiner@ntlworld.com or margrith@btconnect.com.



More than 60 attendees for the annual raclette.

2: Swiss Railways Society at the Festival of Railway Modelling

In a bustling showcase of locomotive allure, the Swiss Railways Society recently made its mark at the esteemed London Festival of Railway Modelling held at Alexandra Palace in North London. Amidst the vibrant atmosphere, our dedicated team manned our customary sales stand, delighting in the opportunity to reconnect with familiar faces and forge new connections with enthusiasts of Swiss railways.

On the 27th of April 2024, our Society convened for its Annual General Meeting at the esteemed Kidderminster Railway Museum. Nestled adjacent to the picturesque Severn Valley steam railway and mainline railway stations in Station Approach, Comberton Hill, Kidderminster DY10 1QX, the museum provided an ideal setting for our gathering. Complementing the AGM was a charming exhibition featuring Swiss railway layouts and esteemed traders offering a variety of model railway equipment. Open to both members and non-members alike, our exhibition welcomed visitors in exchange for a nominal donation to support our organizational efforts. Further information can be accessed on our official website: swissrailsoc.org.uk.



The event took place in London.

3: Calling all Alphorn enthusiasts for a musical gathering!

Join us on Sunday, June 2, 2024, from 10 to 16 at Woodcote Primary School, just off the A4074 between Oxford and Reading. Open to all UK alphorn players, PlayDay promises a day filled with music and friendship.

Enjoy complimentary tea, coffee, and biscuits, and don't forget to bring your mug. Lunch is a packed affair. The schedule includes warm-up sessions, small group play, and an informal performance. It's not just a musical gathering; it's a chance to connect with fellow alphorn enthusiasts. Guests are welcome to attend the 14:30 performance. For more details and registration, please write to frances@amazingalphorn.co.uk. Let's make PlayDay 2024 a melodious memory!

FRANCES JOHNES



UK Alphorn Network's PlayDay 2024.



Non-binary artists: Finta Music Exchange

In May, the Finta Music Exchange programme supports three women – inter and non-binary music artists – to take their first steps towards the UK.

Centred around The Great Escape festival in Brighton, the annual programme offers a transformative experience for emerging artists, providing them with insights into how the UK music industry works and how best to use a showcase festival to their advantage.

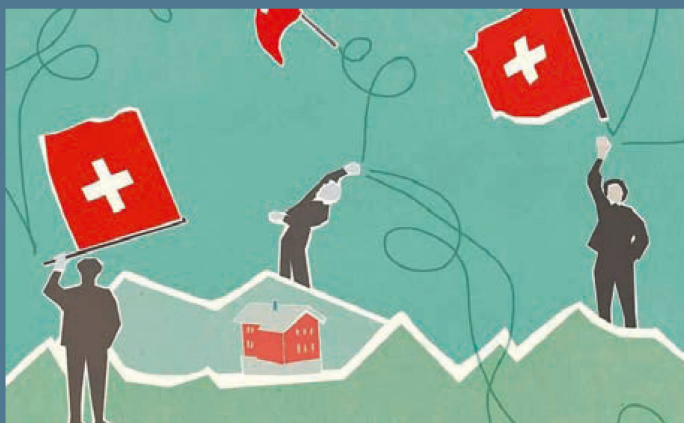
Keep an eye (and ear) out for Anuk Schmelcher (in the picture), Malummi and Sirens of Lesbos.

More info: fintamusicexchange.com

6 June 2024: German language competition

The competition is open to all learners and lovers of German of ALL levels!

This year, we invite you to put together the front page of a fictional newspaper in the German-speaking world. All winning entrants will be invited to a day in London, where they will have the chance to take part in a journalism workshop and award ceremony with other German learners. A collaboration between the DAAD London, the Institute of Languages, Cultures & Societies, University of London and Embassies of German speaking countries in the UK. Info: daad.org.uk/en



London: Join us in leading the Swiss National Day celebration!

Opportunity to Lead! Seeking a co-lead and committee members for the Swiss National Day celebration in London. The committee is looking for volunteers to continue the tradition of organising a memorable event that brings together Swiss in London and beyond.

The groundwork has been laid in previous years, and interested people have the support of experienced committee members. If you're interested, please visit snd-london.com for more details and get in touch with andreas.feller@ehl.ch

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:

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