

**Zeitschrift:** Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad  
**Herausgeber:** Organisation of the Swiss Abroad  
**Band:** 51 (2024)  
**Heft:** 5: Cycling through Jura, the rebellious canton  
  
**Anhang:** Regional Edition : United Kingdom, Ireland

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# REGIONAL EDITION

UNITED KINGDOM | IRELAND

## Editorial

Dear Readers, As we approach the end of this year, we have some important news to share: the Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA) has decided to increase the number of regional issues per year with a fifth edition. This means additional space for our community in the UK/Ireland to voice our experience and report on our events and initiatives. This decision also comes in response to the positive feedback we have received through our readership survey on the Swiss Review's local pages.

Moreover, the UK is currently seeking new delegates for the upcoming 2025 CSA elections. For questions or more information, please reach out to FOSSUK and follow their social media channels. We invite you to consider joining the Council of the Swiss Abroad to represent and support our UK community.

Finally, this year marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Swiss Review magazine since its first publication in 1974. Make sure you check out our special pages dedicated to this milestone in the forthcoming 2025 issue!



GIOIA PALMIERI,  
«UK & IRELAND PAGES»

## Council of the Swiss Abroad 2025 elections:

### Calling the Swiss community in the UK

The Council of the Swiss Abroad is elected every four years, and the UK can send five delegates to represent the interests of the Swiss in the UK. There are endless and exciting opportunities to get involved as a delegate within the working groups of the Council on an array of topics or on a more local level with a diverse range of activities. The Council meets twice a year in person in Switzerland and a third time online. Are you interested in standing as a candidate in the 2025 elections? Below you can hear more about what current delegates have to say about their experience.

*What's your favourite memory of your time as a delegate?*

**Lakshmi:** I am a people person, so getting to meet delegates from around the world at

the annual Congress in Switzerland was really inspiring. There was a real energy and sense of possibility.

**Franz:** As a delegate, I appeared on the evening news, which shows that the views of the Swiss abroad are relevant.

*What aspects as delegate did you enjoy most?*

**Loredana:** Helping Swiss citizens living in the UK, especially throughout the pandemic and Brexit.

**Lakshmi:** I realise we have some power to influence politics in Switzerland. Don't get me wrong – it's slow, bureaucratic and often frustrating. But when you see an issue, the delegates have been pushing for being taken up by politicians, there is a real thrill.

**Andreas:** Being part of a work group in the Council and extending my network not only in Switzerland but also with delegates from around the world, and within the Swiss community in the UK. It's a great way for younger people to gain valuable experience.

*Were you involved in the Swiss community on a local level??*

**Lakshmi:** I wasn't before I became a delegate. I had my Swiss friends but didn't really know about the various groups,

Facebook groups, events, etc.

**Franz:** I am currently the president of the Swiss Club in Edinburgh and over the last few years we have succeeded in attracting new and younger participants with a diverse range of activities.

*Why would you recommend others to stand as a candidate?*

**Lakshmi:** It's a great way to learn about how politics work in Switzerland, to push for issues that are important for the Swiss abroad and to make lifelong friends.

**Franz:** If you are interested in getting the issues that are important to the Swiss abroad in the UK and worldwide onto the agenda of Swiss politics, I recommend standing as a candidate.

ANDREAS FELLER-RYF



## STAND FOR THE 2025 CSA ELECTIONS

Swiss citizens residing in the UK, aged 18 or older, and registered with the Swiss embassy, are eligible to stand as candidates in the 2025 elections.

The application form and further information can be found at

[www.swiss-societies.co.uk/elections](http://www.swiss-societies.co.uk/elections)

Please contact: [president@swiss-societies.co.uk](mailto:president@swiss-societies.co.uk)

## FOSSUK AGM and Congress 2024: Key Highlights



The recent FOSSUK AGM and Congress at the Swiss Church in London brought together the Swiss community in the UK for important updates, discussions, and cultural exchanges. Here's a summary of the key moments:

### Community and collaboration

The AGM opened with a welcome speech by Mr. Thomas Wagner, Consul General at the Swiss Embassy, setting a positive tone. Ambassador Markus Leitner then provided updates on trade agreements between Switzerland and the UK, stressing the strengthening ties between the two countries. He also expressed gratitude to all presidents, committee members, and volunteers for their dedication to the Swiss community in the UK.

### Key decisions and initiatives

The AGM featured important votes by corporate members Unione Ticinese, New Helvetic Society and Swiss Club Edinburgh. Two significant motions passed unanimously: to take part in the pilot project of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad and hold direct elections of all five UK delegates to the Council of the Swiss Abroad and the creation of a task force to develop a strategic plan for FOSSUK. These decisions reflect the organisation's focus on enhancing democratic participation and future planning.

An exciting new scholarship program, presented by Unione Ticinese President Dr. Emilie Martinoni Hoogenboom, aims to support students from Ticino studying in London. This initiative, backed by Fondazione Silvio e Marianne Tarchini and Fondazione Ermotti, underscores the commitment to education and the next generation.

### Advocacy for Swiss Abroad

Special guest Madame Priska Marti Magro dos Reis, Member of the Executive Board and Head of Citizen Service from the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs shared insights on projects like the *#AgingAbroad* initiative, which addresses the challenges faced by ageing Swiss citizens living abroad. She also provided updates on "ETIAS", a new European travel authorization system launching in 2025 to streamline travel and security.

Professor Franz Muheim, CSA Delegate and FOSSUK Committee member discussed efforts to increase the political participation of Swiss expatriates through the "Lobbying/Communication Project", aiming to amplify their concerns at the cantonal level.

Advocacy for Swiss and EU citizens in the UK post-Brexit was a central theme, with ongoing challenges such as digital-only immigration status and residence-based voting rights in England and Northern Ireland.

### Cultural exchanges

The Congress also featured enriching cultural programs, including a presentation by Dr. Carole Durussel on her leadership journey to Antarctica, and a painting exhibition by Madame Guilmette Baghdadi. A theatrical presentation by actresses Nabila Dolfini and Martina Greenwood performed an extract of "Valchera's," a new production focusing on themes of immigration, commissioned by Unione Ticinese.

The FOSSUK AGM and Congress concluded with a strong sense of community, decisive actions, and inspiring cultural exchanges. We extend our gratitude to all participants and invite you to reach out for further details.

LOREDANA GUETG WYATT, PRESIDENT FOSSUK

## New Helvetic Society: A new chapter for the club with fresh faces and exciting times

The New Helvetic Society (NSH) is abuzz with excitement thanks to our new committee! Mark your calendars for some fantastic autumn events:

**8 October:** Test your knowledge at the BSCC Swiss-British Quiz at the Sun and 13 Cantons pub in Soho.

**30 October – 2 November:** Enjoy Valchera's, a touching play about courage and migration, at the Cockpit Theatre.

**November:** Join us for a fondue dinner to embrace winter.

**30 November:** Celebrate the Escalade at the Swiss Embassy with plenty of chocolate!

Since the new committee's arrival, we've hosted diverse activities, including Hyde Park walks, Swiss-themed pub crawls, Euro and Nati watch parties, and a memorable Swiss National Day at the Swiss Church in Covent Garden. Highlights also include a hike along the Seven Sisters Cliffs, a visit to the Beyond Fashion exhibit at Saatchi Gallery, and kayaking trip through London's historic canals.

Whether you're a young professional, a family, or just enjoy good company, the NSH has something for everyone. Join us, meet new people, and enjoy our vibrant community!

To stay updated, become a member, or sign up for events, visit: [linktr.ee/newhelveticsociety](https://linktr.ee/newhelveticsociety)

THE NEW HELVETIC SOCIETY COMMITTEE



## Valchera's play at The Cockpit Theatre: A journey of courage and friendship

Set against the backdrop of pre-war London, “Valchera’s” is more than just a play – it’s a transformative experience. This compelling new work, commissioned by the Unione Ticinese (UT) to mark its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, delves into themes of emigration, courage, and the enduring power of friendship.

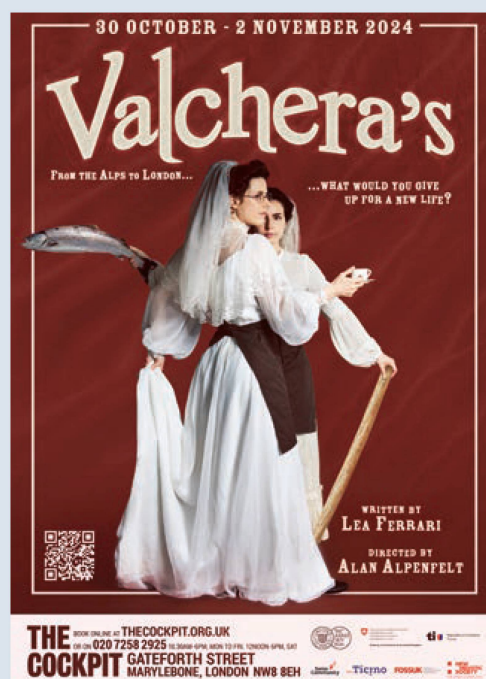
The narrative centres on Iride, a passionate emigrant from the Swiss Alps, who finds herself entangled with Tina, a headstrong restaurateur. Iride’s arrival at Tina’s restaurant, Valchera’s, unearths a mysterious past that challenges Tina’s traditional views. As the story unfolds amidst the clatter of kitchen utensils and the aroma of cooking, the characters confront their personal histories and make pivotal decisions about their futures. The play poses a profound question: What are you willing to give up for a new life?

“Valchera’s” is a collaborative effort by Swiss Italian artists based in London and the Swiss Canton of Ticino, highlighting the rich cultural exchange between Switzerland and the UK. Written by Lea Ferrari, a graduate of Luminanza, the play is inspired by her great-grandparents’ wedding menu and explores emigration from a unique female perspective. Ferrari’s script is both thought-provoking and timely, addressing issues of women’s rights and existential questions through the lens of a historical narrative. “As time blurs, a story from the twentieth century resurfaces,” Ferrari notes. “The women’s struggle for rights, only recently achieved, still resonates today.”

Directed by Alan Alpenfelt and dramaturged by Matteo Luoni, both founders of the Luminanza playwriting program, “Valchera’s” features London-based Ticinese actors Martina Greenwood and Nabila Dolfini. Vittorio Parri, an experienced stage manager and assistant director, and Noemi Ferrari, a movement coach, round out the team.

The play will be performed at The Cockpit Theatre in London from October 30 to November 2, with six performances including two matinees. The theatre, known for its multilingual Voilà Europe Festival, will promote “Valchera’s” alongside the “Settimana della Lingua Italiana nel Mondo – SLIM,” boosting its visibility.

Plans include showcasing the play in Ticino and potentially other Swiss cities in 2025.



Credit Paolo  
Paparesta of Togada  
[www.togada.com](http://www.togada.com)



Tickets: [thecockpit.org.uk/show/valcheras](https://thecockpit.org.uk/show/valcheras)

## New release alert: “Miles Above” by Nat Cartier & Dara Dubh



Swiss artist Nat Cartier and Irish harpist Dara Dubh have teamed up for an exciting new single, “Miles Above.” Dara, known for performing at Edinburgh’s Military Tattoo, and Nat, a prominent UK-based producer & multi-instrumentalist, blend their talents in this eclectic track.

Featuring a unique mix of harp, drums, sax, bass, and vocals, “Miles Above” offers a fresh listening experience. Discover this dynamic collaboration by searching “Miles Above” on your favourite music platform!

Unique harp, drums, sax, bass, and vocals define ‘Miles Above’



## Swiss National Day in London: A celebration of culture and community

On Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> August, London's West End came alive with the sights and sounds of Switzerland as the Swiss community gathered to celebrate Swiss National Day. Held at the Swiss Church, the evening was filled with Swiss culture, national dishes, lively music, and raffle prizes.

Traditionally celebrated with special food, choral music, fireworks, and paper lanterns, this year's London celebration was once again organised by dedicated volunteers with strong ties to Switzerland. The well-attended event featured the Swiss Ambassador, delicious cuisine, and a raffle, thanks to generous sponsors like Switzerland Tourism, Ricola, St. Moritz Restaurant, Swiss International Airlines and many more! For details visit [snd-london.com](https://snd-london.com).

Thank you to everyone who joined us and supported this unforgettable celebration!



## UT 150 Anniversary: Unforgettable weekend in London with Pro-Ticino delegates

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of May, the Swiss community in London continued the festivities marking the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Unione Ticinese which hosted the annual general assembly of Pro-Ticino organisation and supported the FOSSUK AGM's cultural program.

**Friday evening:** kicked off with an amazing concert by Voce

del Brenno at The Swiss Church in London, setting the tone for the days ahead.

**Saturday:** was filled with many activities, including the FOSSUK AGM, the Pro Ticino Presidents' Council, and the Delegates' Assembly. The day culminated with a reception hosted by Swiss Ambassador Markus and Mrs Doris at their

residence. Attendees were then treated to a memorable dinner cruise along the Thames, featuring presentations by Martina Greenwood and Nabila Dolfini and an art display by Karin Lanini Arthofer.

**Sunday:** brought a fascinating guided tour with Peter Barber, followed by a visit to the London Canal Museum,

where participants enjoyed a Victorian ice cream-making demonstration.

Attendees from Ticino, Switzerland, the USA, Italy, France, and Argentina joined in the celebrations, making it an unforgettable three-day event.



Simone Giampaolo received the 'Premio Pro Ticino 2024' at the Embassy.



La Voce del Brenno Choir at The Swiss Church, London.



## Bringing the Alps to the UK: Frances Jones unites British alphorn players in magical gathering

UK Alpine Horn expert Frances Jones has been working on a new project. 'There are a lot of people in the UK who own an alphorn now', she explains, 'so I thought it would be lovely to create an opportunity for people to meet and enjoy playing their alphorns together'.

Dr Jones, from Reading, has been teaching alphorn and coaching on alphorn courses in Austria and Switzerland for fifteen years and has a wealth of experience with the world of authentic alphorn music. She is enthusiastic about the magical feeling that it engenders in all who play and hear it. 'I wanted to bring that experience to UK alphorn owners who have not necessarily had the chance to play in ensembles in the Alps or to discover the native language of the instrument.

The alphorn is part of the natural world, with a unique repertoire and style of playing. Whenever you hear an alphorn, it transports you straight to an idyllic mountain landscape'. Originally used for calling the cows in the mountains, its sound is now thought of as the voice of the mountains themselves. It is a unique, haunting and unforgettable sound.

Frances set up the first-ever Alphorn PlayDay for Sunday 2 June at Downe House School near Newbury in the Berkshire hills. Eleven people came to play from all over the UK. 'It was an idyllic location, feeling remarkably like a stunning Swiss monastery', she enthused. 'The weather was perfect and we were able to play outside, where the alphorn belongs, both all together and in smaller groups too. We had the most wonderful time, and for the second half of the afternoon, guests were invited to come to listen and enjoy the unique experience too'. A number of Swiss people came and everyone found it very moving. One of the players was in tears at the end of the final piece, it was such a powerful and evocative sight and sound. 'Wasn't it fabulous! Just like in the mountains.' 'What an afternoon!! It was quite magical and I can imagine your feet aren't going to hit the valley floor for a while!'

BBC TV, radio and press coverage conveyed the joy, delight and uniqueness of the special day. The Headmistress of this exclusive girls's school said that a highlight of her week was to see their school on the TV thanks to Frances and her alphorners!

Participants and audience alike are all hoping that this will now be an annual event.



Dr Frances Jones set up the first-ever Alphorn PlayDay Sunday 2 June in the Berkshire hills.



Bringing the experience to UK alphorn owners to play in Alpine ensembles.



The weather was perfect!



A number of Swiss people also present.



BBC TV, radio and press coverage conveyed the joy, delight and uniqueness of the special day.



**Movie:** Swiss director new comedy-drama hits UK cinemas!

Swiss director Pascal Bergamin's *Portraits of Dangerous Women* was released in UK cinemas on 4<sup>th</sup> October. This wry comedy-drama, set in the English countryside, features a stellar British cast, including Yasmin Monet Prince and Tara Fitzgerald. The story follows three strangers whose lives intertwine after a road accident. Check local cinemas to catch this unique film.



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**Scotland:** Switzerland at the Festivals in Edinburgh

An intense few weeks of outstanding performances at the world-renowned Festivals in Edinburgh ended at the end of August.

Switzerland prominently featured in the Edinburgh International Festival (EIF), Fringe Festival, the Military Tattoo and others as previously communicated via the Embassy's culture newsletter issued by: [London.culture@eda.admin.ch](mailto:London.culture@eda.admin.ch)

PETER MULLER-MCDOUGALL, HON. CONSUL GENERAL EDINBURGH



The Majesticks drum corps at their debut at the Military Tattoo 2024

Thank you for your patience. Our interview with Reverend Carla Maurer is postponed and will be featured in the 2025 Swiss Review UK/IRL. We wish Reverend Maurer all the best with her new parish.



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](http://swiss-societies.co.uk) and FOSSUK's social media:

Facebook: [@aukswiss](https://www.facebook.com/aukswiss)  
 Twitter: [@FOSSUK](https://twitter.com/FOSSUK)



## 1: Southern Area Swiss Club celebrates Swiss National Day

On 1<sup>st</sup> August, 31 adults and 3 children gathered for the Southern Area Swiss Club's National Day celebration. Attendees enjoyed a delicious savoury and sweet buffet, followed by a lively raffle. Mark your calendars for the next event: Gschwellti and Chaes on Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2024!

Info: [berni@nbtsc.plus.com](mailto:berni@nbtsc.plus.com)

BERNI CURTRESS



## 2: Taunton and Somerset Swiss Club – Growing together

The Taunton and Somerset Swiss Club continues to thrive, offering a warm and welcoming environment for members. The annual Raclette supper in November is always a favourite, where members gather to enjoy delicious Swiss cheese. Social events like pub meetups and shared carveries bring members together throughout the year.

Swiss National Day on 1<sup>st</sup> August is the highlight of the year, celebrated joyously in a member's garden with everyone contributing salads or desserts.

Our President, Christiane Greening, leads the club with her joyful spirit and is now joined by her first great-grandson, Harry, one of our youngest members. We are grateful for her dedication to making everyone feel welcome. For more information, contact Christiane at 01823 327308.

Info: [caroline.rainford@gmail.com](mailto:caroline.rainford@gmail.com)

CAROLINE RAINFORD



1a: Delicious savory and sweet buffet.  
1b: 34 people present.  
2: President's first great-grandson, Harry.  
3: The room was beautifully decorated.

## 3: Swiss National Day celebration in Liverpool and Wirral area

The Swiss in Liverpool and Wirral area group gathered for a delightful celebration of Swiss National Day at The Ship Restaurant in Cheshire.

The event was filled with warmth and joy, as participants enjoyed a beautifully organized celebration. The room was thoughtfully decorated, and the table goodies added a special touch to the festive atmosphere. A big thank you to everyone involved in making this event so fabulous! Our next event will be a Raclette evening on December 7<sup>th</sup>. For more information, please get in touch with Karin at [karin.mary.evans@gmail.com](mailto:karin.mary.evans@gmail.com). We look forward to seeing you there!

KARIN EVANS





## PASSPORT AND ID CARD: Information for Swiss nationals resident in Ireland and Northern Ireland – REMINDER

Staff members from the Regional Consular Centre (RCC) in London will visit Dublin with the mobile biometric passport station in the week beginning 18 November 2024.

If you would like to take advantage of this opportunity, please submit an online application via [www.schweizerpass.ch](http://www.schweizerpass.ch) by Friday, 25 October 2024 at the latest (applications received after the deadline will not be considered). In the online application form, under “Remarks”, please enter the following details:

“Dublin” and “your marital status” (“never married”, “married”, “divorced”, “widowed” etc.).

If nothing is written in the remarks, the application will not be taken into consideration for an appointment in Dublin. Kindly note that we will only get back to you with further information after the above-mentioned deadline. Thank you.

## TRAVEL ADVICE: What is the Schengen Entry/Exit System?

The Schengen Entry/Exit System (EES) is an information system for managing the external Schengen borders. It will register all third-country nationals (including persons travelling with a UK passport) entering and leaving the Schengen area – of which Switzerland is a member – and automatically calculate their duration of stay. It is expected to come into force on 10 November 2024. More information: [https://travel-europe.europa.eu/ees\\_en](https://travel-europe.europa.eu/ees_en)

F Swiss-UK and Swiss-EU/EEA nationals are advised to enter the Schengen Area with a Swiss, EU or EEA identity document (passport or ID card).



## THE UK eVISA: Information for Swiss citizens who rely on old-style ILR in the UK

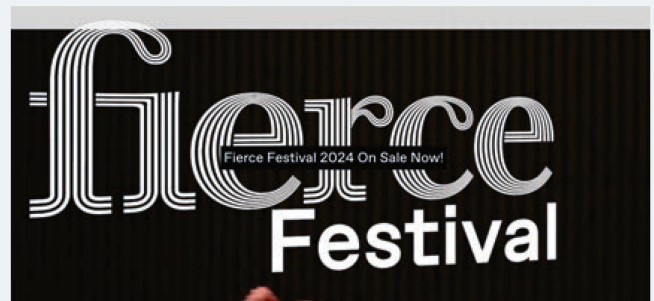
The UK government is replacing physical immigration documents with digital proof of immigration status, called eVisa, by 2025. Swiss citizens who currently rely on legacy paper documents to prove their residence rights in the UK, such as passports with an ink stamp or vignette sticker (where the holder has ILR – Indefinite Leave to Remain or Indefinite Leave to Enter) need to take action to create a UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) account. This will not affect their underlying immigration status and it will be free of charge. More information:

[www.gov.uk/guidance/online-immigration-status-evisa](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/online-immigration-status-evisa)  
[#why-do-i-need-a-ukvi-account](https://twitter.com/why-do-i-need-a-ukvi-account)

## Birmingham: Swiss Selection at Fierce Festival in October

Performance / Parties / Politics / Pop – that is this year's Fierce Festival. Birmingham's festival of international theatre, performance and experiences invites Swiss and Switzerland-based artists Alina Arshi, husbands, Jeremy Nedd, Alessandro Schiattarella, Tiran Willemse for 5 days of shows in October.

<https://wearefierce.org>



### 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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### 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: **20<sup>th</sup> December 2024**  
 Date of publication: **31<sup>st</sup> January 2025**

### Next Issues

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