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Main Feature

CUTS CONTINUE AT SWISS EMBASSIES

Consular services at the Swiss embassy in Dublin are to be transferred to London in the latest phase of restructuring of the Swiss diplomatic network. Ireland is just one of five nations affected. Swiss living in Uruguay, Paraguay, Malaysia and Portugal will also have to turn to neighbouring countries for their consular services.

The streamlining of consular activities, which came into force last year, has provoked angry reactions among Swiss living abroad and the consuls themselves. The foreign ministry has been reported as saying the latest moves were not a "closure" but a "transfer of services". The changes are expected to help free-up resources to improve consular services in countries

with emerging economies, such as India and China, which have seen a particularly steep rise in tourists wanting to visit Switzerland.

“**The streamlining of consular activities has provoked angry reactions.**”

The restructuring programme was the main topic of debate at last year's FOSSUK AGM in York, in which Jacques-Simon Eggly, President of the Organisation of Swiss Abroad

(OSA) criticised the Foreign Ministry for reducing consulate numbers and pushing ahead too hastily with its restructuring programme, before viable alternative measures were in place to appease disgruntled Swiss, the large number of whom live abroad.

The OSA president spoke passionately about the need for consulates in countries where there are large populations of Swiss expats, not where few Swiss lived.

“We need consulates in European Union countries,” he told delegates in York, “These countries are important friends of ours. That is where the majority of our Swiss citizens abroad live and that is where our consulates should be.”



Embassy of Switzerland in Dublin

According to the foreign ministry, most consular tasks can now be carried out by post or electronically. In addition, a helpline is planned for those in countries affected by consulate closures. It will soon be in operation 24 hours a day and 365 days a year.

Sport

Bruno Berner bows out of English league football.

Swiss International footballer, Bruno Berner, has retired from English league football after five years playing for Blackburn Rovers and, most recently, Leicester City.

In an interview with the local newspaper, ThisisLeicestershire, the 34-year-old said playing for Leicester City had been one of the highlights of his career.

Berner became a cult hero during his three-and-a-half years at Leicester and fans expressed their disappointment at his departure in the comments page of the local paper.

“TOP BLOKE! You have been a credit to our club.” wrote daveyboy1963. “True professionals like you are sadly few and far between”.

Berner's passion for sport went beyond the stands of King Power Stadium. He worked closely with the Swiss embassy's "Social Inclusion through Sport" initiative.

“The Embassy could always rely on Bruno Berner for his support in any of its sporting projects.” Elisabeth Baxter, Head of Development & Sport told the Swiss Review.



“Even the Swiss Cultural Fund in Britain benefited from his generous support at a fundraising event last year with a donation of VIP hospitality tickets at a friendly football match between Leicester City and Real Madrid.”

Now Berner is focused on his future as a coach in his native Switzerland.

“I may have a tear in one eye, but I am looking forward with the other,” he said.

“I have been working towards this next phase in my career for the past couple of years because I need to prepare for the next 30 years of my professional life.”

Embassy

Record number of Swiss registered abroad

More than 700,000 Swiss nationals are now living abroad, which is about 10% of the total population. According to the latest report from the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the vast majority, more than 60% of expats, live in Europe with almost 97% of those living in member states of the EU. Three out of four Swiss nationals also have dual nationality.

France has the largest Swiss community accounting for a quarter of all Swiss abroad. Germany follows with almost 80,000 Swiss nationals (11.23%) registered there. The USA is the third favourite destination for Swiss abroad. Overall, there was an increase of 8,517 (1.23%) Swiss who moved abroad last year.

Latest figures in the UK (2011) showed 29,778 Swiss citizens were registered at the embassy, 273 more than in the previous twelve months. The Swiss colony has grown by almost 20% since January 2000.

“There is undoubtedly more movement among Swiss citizens, especially in the labour market and with young people interested in studying here in the UK.” an Embassy official said.

Editorial

Dear Readers,



Many of you will be disappointed to read about the continuing cutbacks facing consulates around the world, especially as more Swiss live abroad today than ever before!

We bid farewell to Swiss footballer Bruno Berner who has retired from English league football, and for those who might have thought a church minister only works on Sundays, check out just how much is packed into a day.

There is also a first-hand account of preparations for London 2012, but it is our young readers who feature strongly in this particular issue.

A couple of Anglo-Swiss teenagers eloquently describe their first life-defining trip to Switzerland without the parents. Back home, two sets of siblings start to foster their sense of Swiss-ness through a good read and our first young competition winners gleefully snuggle up to their cute and cuddly prizes. **Andrew Littlejohn**

The three smallest Swiss colonies are in São Tomé and Príncipe, Micronesia and Kiribati, each of which has one Swiss national.

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Media

Changes imminent at swissinfo.ch

Last year, many of you campaigned to save swissinfo.ch, the international media platform for Swiss living abroad, by signing an online petition. Well, your efforts have paid off – swissinfo.ch will continue to report from and about Switzerland. However, cuts have to be

made and a streamlined swissinfo.ch is in the pipeline. Monika Gysin, Head of Marketing and Communications, explains the new direction for the nine-language service.

In recent years, swissinfo.ch, which is partly financed by the federal govern-

swissinfo.ch

ment, has often faced budget cuts. The government's latest cost-cutting programme for 2011–13 proposed slashing their budget completely. Swissinfo.ch is financed 50% by the federal government, and 50% by the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation (SRG SSR). The SRG then argued they would also remove their half of the budget, which would have led to the closure of Switzerland's international media platform, as we know it.

More than 10,000 Swiss at home and abroad campaigned to save swissinfo.ch by signing an online petition. The federal government finally shelved the proposed savings programme because, as it turned out, there was a surplus in tax revenue.

However, cuts have to be made, and in order to secure the long-term survival of swissinfo.ch, a working group was commissioned to work on a new direction for the nine-language service. The aim of the project is to adapt the internet platform in response to, and in

readiness for, new reading habits and technological developments.

The new approach was approved last year by the Board of Directors at SRG SSR and should be fully operational by the end of 2012. With this new focus, swissinfo.ch plans to phase out 40 of 126 full-time equivalent positions. The output will be streamlined and the annual costs of the international mandate are expected to be reduced by approximately CHF 9 million.

The new editorial concept is to focus on an international audience. The three regional editorial departments for the main Swiss national languages – German, French and Italian – will be combined into a new national editorial department and downsized. A central theme will be prominently discussed and scrutinised daily on the web pages. This will involve a redesign of the website. The relaunch is scheduled for early summer 2012.

Monika Gysin
www.swissinfo.ch



A Day in the Life of...

REV NATHALIE DÜRMÜLLER

I am often asked, "So what do you do apart from the Sunday Services?" This always makes me smile, as it is difficult to answer, because every working day is different.

I usually work from home in the morning and then go into the office, to meetings or visits in the afternoon. My first task is to keep up-to-date with my emails. Today Swiss Tourism has emailed offering to sponsor a generous prize for the auction at our 250th Anniversary Event on the 19th May at the Swiss Embassy. This is great news and I quickly respond thanking them.

The preparations for the anniversary celebrations take quite a bit of my time at the moment, but I have made a point of not allowing this to prevent me fulfilling my daily pastoral work.

In another email, there's a request from a local church to hire our premises. Ventures like this help bring in much-needed revenue. Then there's an e-mail from an artist who wants to exhibit at the church. I am really pleased to see that our Visual Arts programme is becoming better known among the arts scene in London. This proposal will have to be discussed at the Arts

Committee, which I chair, and then I shall update our board members.

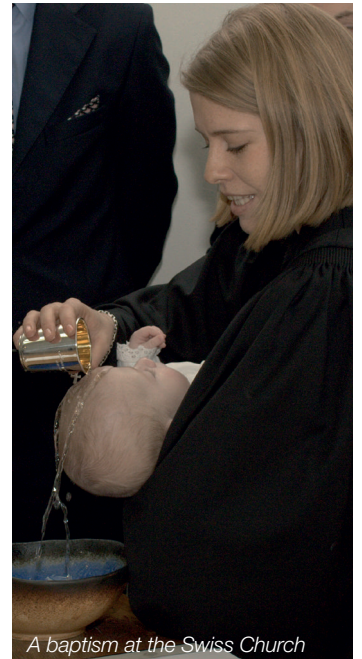
This afternoon, I plan to visit members of our congregation, so I let my colleagues, Nicole Jakubowitz and Ursula Jost, the President of the church, know that I won't be available for most of the afternoon.

“ I was welcomed with the smell of a homemade “Apfelwähe”

I have arranged to meet two elderly ladies in Lewisham. After a long journey from the manse in Crouch End, I was welcomed with the smell of a homemade “Apfelwähe” – apple tart. Some of the Swiss traditions are just wonderful! I usually visit people who are going through a difficult time in their lives, be it because of illness, death of a partner or other circumstances. Sometimes I offer to say the

Lord's Prayer with them, but most of the time I wait to hear what they want to tell me or whether they have a special wish with regards to praying together or a religious subject they want to talk about. I don't like to make people feel they have to talk to me about their faith, but I'm always glad if this topic comes up during a visit.

Unfortunately, I have to keep my visit short this time, as I still have to prepare the last bits and pieces for the Sunday Service, which is with a baptism this week. I like these services to be more personal for the families, so I write an extra part for the liturgy to make the family feel especially welcome at the Swiss Church. Of course, I always hope families come back for other services after the baptism. That's why I have introduced Family Services. But in our case, we often find families, quite understandably, tend to go to their local church or to the church that is linked to their children's school. When families and children do join us, not only for service, but also for other events like our Fondue Fundraiser, this always gives me the impression that we are a church that is alive, because we want to be a



A baptism at the Swiss Church

place, where everybody is welcome.

Finally at 7.00pm I can leave the office with the good feeling that I managed to do most of what I had intended to do.



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Competition

The Otter Challenge – Winners

In our previous issue we invited young readers to take part in 'The Otter Challenge', following Grace Yoxon's fascinating article about a typical day at the International Otter Survival Fund (IOSF) on the Isle of Skye in Scotland. To win one of the realistic-looking otters, we asked our youngest readers to guess the number of otter species in the world. The answer was 13 and there were 5 winning entries altogether.

The first two winners picked to receive their Plush otters were Oriana & Nicholas Tsouvalis and Fred & Katarina Jimack. Well done to both families!



Katarina (6) and Fred (9) Jimack with 'Otto' the otter

As this was our first competition in the pages of the Swiss Review, and after many hours of deliberation, we decided to dig deep into our pockets and award all those children a prize, who successfully guessed the correct answer!

So, congratulations Rowan Otter Carne (2), Seth Fischer (4 1/2) and Ethan Ehrenbold (6)



Oriana (9) and Nicholas (6) with their otter 'Bruno' and guinea pigs, Pipkin and Pepper.

Swiss Clubs in the UK

CLUB NEWS · CLUB NEWS

Torbay Swiss Club

Torbay Swiss Club held their Christmas Lunch at the Livermead House Hotel on the 15th of January 2012.

The Torbay Swiss Club meets every month with different activities: some new and some old favorites.



Diary dates:

April 21st: Club AGM at the Cat's Whiskers, Torre, Torquay.

May 13th: Taxi ferry to the Double Locks Hotel, Exeter for Sunday Lunch.

For more details contact: Geoff Rose on 01626 778469

Swiss Club Edinburgh

On the 3rd Feb 2012 the Swiss Club Edinburgh had its 52nd annual Dinner attended by some 25 of its members.

This took place at the Caledonian Hilton and started with an Apero followed by a magnificent Dinner served with Swiss Wines. This was much appreciated by all.



Andy McGhie, Pam Smart

FOSSUK

An open Invitation to the 47th FOSSUK Annual General Meeting 2012

The Swiss Church in London will be the venue for the FOSSUK AGM on Saturday 9th June 2012. For many this will be the first visit to the church. Not only will the Swiss Church host this year's AGM, in the midst of its 250th anniversary celebrations, but there will also be a special musical treat in store for its visitors.

An informal dinner is planned on the Friday evening for any early birds who wish to participate. Details of the venue will be announced on the FOSSUK website in good time.

Proceedings will start with a workshop on the Saturday at 11 o'clock. Ariane Rusticelli, Head of Communications and Marketing at the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad (OSA), will give an in-depth introduction into the highly successful social media platform for Swiss expats, "SwissCommunity.org". She will also demonstrate how our clubs and societies can use this social network site to its full potential.

The AGM is scheduled to commence at 2pm. Following the statutory part of the meeting, the Committee will make room for our guest speakers: FOSSUK's Hon. President, Amba-

sador Anton Thalmann; Jean-Paul Aeschlimann, vice-President of OSA; and representing the Federal Department for Foreign Affairs, Division VI, Jean François Lichtenstern who is the Head of the Service for the Swiss Abroad.

With the official part of the day successfully concluded, it will be time for the aforementioned musical delight. Peter Yardley-Jones, the organist at the Swiss Church will treat us to the promised recital on the fine "Spät" organ. If we listen very carefully we may even hear "our" organ pipes, donated by FOSSUK and Swiss Review UK Pages.

Before bringing our AGM to a close, the Ambassador has very kindly offered to host a reception. For those who do not need to rush off, a dinner has also been arranged at London's "oldest" Swiss Restaurant, St Moritz, where Armin Lötscher will be our host.

All the necessary information relevant to the AGM will appear on our website in good time. It will also be sent to Club Presidents.

As this year's meeting is in London, the committee and I are looking



forward to welcoming a large number of participants.

May I end on a practical note! As our meeting coincides with the Jubilee weekend any reservations, be it train, plane or hotel should be made as early as possible. Availability and prices are proving a challenge in June.

For all AGM updates, please go to the website: www.swiss-societies.co.uk

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Summer Camp

YOUNG SWISS RETRACE THEIR ROOTS

Every year about 400 Swiss youngsters who live abroad re-engage with their family's home country at sports camps or on language courses. The OSA, Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, helps children and grandchildren of Swiss expats maintain a strong cultural tie with their parents' or grandparents' homeland. Phoebe Prior Jones from Northampton and south Londoner, Timothy Stettler, are just two British-Swiss teenagers who have benefited from the unforgettable Swiss experience, where friendships are made and kept up long after the OSA camp is over.



Timothy Stettler in Switzerland

Every morning I would make my own way into Bern which was thrilling, as I got a real sense of how it was to live as a local in this historical and cultural city. The afternoons were given over to arranged activities. One day, instead of German classes, we went sledging in Grindelwald, which was loads of fun, as the weather was amazing and we got to see the skiers practising for the FIS Freestyle Ski World Cup. This was definitely one of the highlights of the trip. Another highlight was visiting family I had only seen once or twice before, and some I had never even met! For two weeks I got to live a completely different life. This was a real adventure for a 15-year-old from south London!

Timothy Stettler

My father is half Swiss and I have family spread out throughout Switzerland. I have always felt proud of my Swiss blood and when my father mentioned the possibility to take part in a language course in Bern, I thought it would be a great way to strengthen my Swiss links. I could improve my German, meet new people and have fun! When my parents dropped me off at my guest family's house, I thought I was going to regret coming on the trip, but by that evening I had already got to know my host family quite well and knew the trip was going to be fun!

My Grandmother was Swiss and my father, not wanting us to lose touch with Switzerland, signed my brother and me up to go to Swiss camp in 2005 when I was 9. I was extremely nervous and wouldn't leave my brother's side for the first two days, but the leaders were so friendly, as were the other campers, that I soon felt completely at ease. We did so many wonderful activities such as hiking, rock climbing, swimming and even visiting the president! I barely had time to feel home sick. I enjoyed it so much I went back the next year, this time without my brother.



Phoebe Prior Jones abseiling

Last year, I decided to do something different and attended a language course. My host was so welcoming and my roommate so great, it was like we were a little family. Swiss camps have made me who I am. They have given me my sense of adventure and have made me able to make friends and fit in easily.

If you are a young person deciding whether to go, do, you won't regret it. I never have and if I could relive all my Swiss camps I wouldn't hesitate.

Phoebe Prior Jones

More information

For more about sports camps and language courses go to:

<http://tinyurl.com/84xcdyc>



Education

Scottish students see opportunities in Switzerland

Scotland's first Think German Career Fair was held in Edinburgh at the beginning of March. The Swiss Consulate General participated in this debut event, jointly organised by the German Consulate General and Forrester High School.



The objective of the first Think German Career Fair held in Scotland was not only to offer further education and job opportunities to school leavers and students, but also to emphasise the importance of speaking other languages such as German. The Swiss stand was particularly popular with students wishing to undertake an interim in Switzerland to complete their studies in e.g. law, chemistry and international politics.

The event attracted some 300 pupils and more than 100 students from nearby universities.

The debut event was considered a great success by the organisers and participants alike and it is understood an even bigger event of this kind will be held again next year.



Peter Müller-McDougall
Honorary Consul General
Edinburgh

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There really is very little more to say about it except TRY IT!



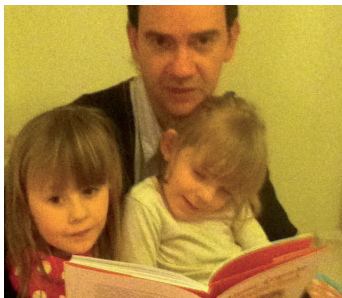
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Book Review

ALPINE LEGENDS OF SWITZERLAND

In the last issue of the Swiss Review we asked for keen readers to make themselves known, as we were looking for reviewers of "Alpine Legends of Switzerland", a medley of classic folk tales and mountain mysteries. These entertaining stories have been eloquently re-told by Mark Rudie Steiner, a Swiss writer and broadcaster who lives in Argyll, Scotland. As you will see, we were not short of avid readers to share their thoughts.



This is a timely and beautifully presented collection of stories. The tales were just the right length for sharing our loud with my daughters, Madeleine (7) and Gracie (4) – on average 3 to 4 pages – perfect for bedtime reading. The style of writing was such that it often felt a story was being told rather than read. Gracie loved the collection from the off, quickly picking up on the simple moral lessons contained in each. 'Elsi, the Fearless Milkmaid', proved to be the children's most favourite, and introduced my daughters to a brave Swiss heroine who could give their much-loved Heidi a run for her money. Mountains, of course, loom large in this collection and the thought they might harbour so much adventure, myth and legend really captured Gracie's imagination. She took the book into school to show her classmates and teacher, proudly telling

them, that she too is from the Swiss mountains and has never been keener to visit her Heimat, Grindelwald! The limited number of illustrations meant that 'Alpine Legends' didn't always hold the attention of our four-year old. No matter, this is a lovely collection, which should grace the bookshelves of all Anglo-Swiss families.

Jason Halsey

The first story re-tells the legend and truth of William Tell in a fresh and exciting way, with great attention to detail. I was transported to the mountains and Lake Lucerne, feeling the desperation of the local population at the cruelty and humiliation imposed by the tyrant, Governor Gessler. I could not wait to read more stories, but was disappointed with 'The Alpine Treasure Cove', 'The Dark Lake' and especially the last, 'Grandma Lilly's Own Christmas Story' as they lacked the detail and drama of the other stories. However, my imagination was back in the driving seat with 'The Honest Man's Reward', with far my favourite short story, with moral values that apply as much today as then, about the fallacy of arrogance and the wisdom of kindness to others. The short stories selected have relevant values for young minds and I thoroughly enjoyed gaining a deeper understanding of Swiss courage, moral fibre and honesty.

Mrs. Ané-Mari Peter

My husband Doug and I liked 'William Tell' as it gave an impression of how Switzerland became a free nation by the actions of this powerful archer. He is described as a "man of the mountains" and the "bravest fighter for freedom". We liked the imagery used when he sliced the apple off his son's head, slicing it clean in half and at the same time the "rooster crowed, the goats bleated and the pigs grunted".

(Douglas and Heidi Cameron)

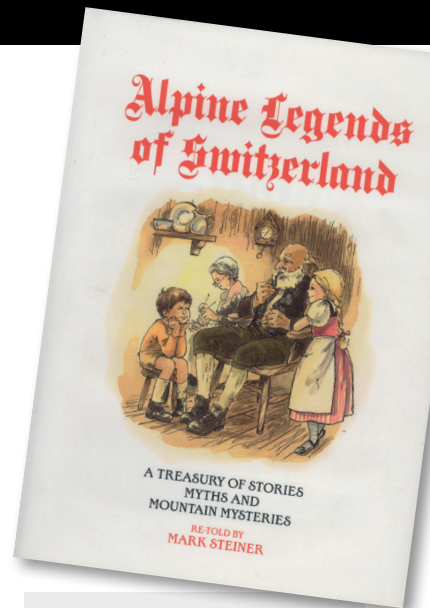


I liked 'The Secrets of the Castle' because it was full of imagination and was filled with brilliant description, and it left me wanting more. The story was well illustrated and gave me a sense of what the story was about.

(Lucy Cameron, Age 12)

My favourite story was 'Why Daisies Blush Pink' because it reminded me of all the beautiful alpine flowers I know, such as edelweiss and gentians. They are described as "a rainbow carpet of brightly-coloured blooms". The snow queen is greeted by the flowers in this chapter.

(Sarah Cameron, Age 15)



More information

To purchase a copy of 'Alpine Legends of Switzerland' for £2, contact: editor@swissreview.co.uk or contact Mark Steiner directly: Atlantic House, PA34 4RF, Argyll, Scotland. Tel: 01852 300 593

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Sport

5 FACTS ABOUT MAN UNITED SIGNING SWISS CENTRE-BACK FREDERIC VESELI

Teenager Frederic Veseli has become the first player since Carlos Tevez and Owen Hargreaves to make the switch between Manchester City and Manchester United. What do we know about him? Dan Coombs, sports editor at 'Here is the City' spelled out five facts about this young up-and-coming Swiss centre-back.

- 1 He captained his country at the under-17s FIFA World Cup held in 2009, which Switzerland won.
- 2 He has been at Manchester City since 2008 in their youth set up, but the closest he got to competitive first team football was as an unused substitute in a Carling Cup game against West Brom last season.
- 3 He will expect playing time very soon, his agent was very critical of Manchester City and the way they treat their young players, arguing they simply do not get a look in at the club because of the team's need for instant success.

4 Veseli said the tipping factor which persuaded him to sign for Man United was his meeting with Sir Alex Ferguson. He said he found it impossible to say no to a manager who has won nearly every major honour in the game.

5 The 19-year-old, who used to play for Lausanne Sport, is a centre back. He has been tipped to develop into a central midfielder.

Dan Coombs, Sports Editor, Here is the City



Frederic Veseli tackles world-famous Brazilian, Neymar da Silva

Charity

A trek across Europe

When Gérard Varin closed the door of his house in Duffield, near Derby, on 1st April it marked the beginning of a 30-day expedition to Switzerland. Gérard is running 740 miles – the equivalent of a marathon a day – to his home village of Seleute, in the canton of Jura.

In recent years, six local women from Duffield – all in their 40s and with young children – have been diagnosed with breast cancer. Running to Switzerland is Gerard's way to help make a difference. He hopes to raise £20,000 for the Breast Cancer Campaign.

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Five minutes with...

DENIS OSWALD, CHAIR OF OLYMPIC WATCHDOG

Denis Oswald is a Swiss lawyer and former Olympic rower. He is also head of the London 2012 co-ordination commission, the group overseeing preparations for this year's summer Olympics. Splitting his time between London and Lausanne, Oswald reports back to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) about the progress being made to ensure a successful sporting event. And there have been some glowing reports. In fact, he has been known to award organisers a staggering 9.75 out of ten following inspection visits. Although London seems to have all the ingredients for success, Oswald recognises some areas still have to be closely monitored.

Swiss Review: You have been involved with a number of past Olympic Games, either as a participant or organiser. How does London 2012 compare to past events?

Denis Oswald: Each Games is unique, particularly when attending in a different capacity. As an athlete, there is the excitement of competing and the focus is on your own personal performance. As an organiser, you

are always working on ironing out the final details. I think London will deliver truly top quality Olympic Games – the recent test events have shown the organisers are on the right track.



There will be 5,000 dope tests... at London 2012

SR: You recently inspected football stadiums around the UK, which will be used as venues during the Games. What factors do you consider to ensure high standards?

DO: Naturally, the most important thing is that the athletes compete under the best possible conditions. After that we aim to ensure the experiences of all other stakeholders – spectators, the media, etc. – are up to the expected standards. I was very impressed with the stadiums and with the people working on the Games in each city. London is very clearly the

focal point of the 2012 Games, but there is a real desire to ensure that the whole of the country is involved. The football cities show how the Games are reaching out to communities beyond the capital.

SR: What measures are being taken to ensure drug abuse does not tarnish this year's Olympic Games?

DO: There is no place for doping in sport and we take a strict zero-tolerance stance on this issue. There will be 5,000 dope tests, including 1,000 blood tests at London 2012. This represents the greatest number of tests ever at an Olympic Games. It is also worth noting that a large number of the athletes participating at the Games will already have been tested several times in the months leading up to the Games.

SR: And what about the issue of illegal gambling? IOC President Jacques Rogge has stated that irregular betting threatens the integrity of all sport.

DO: The IOC has strengthened ties with important players in this field, including police authorities, legal betting operators and governments in Europe, the US and Asia. A Working Group is now actively engaged in determining the best ways to educate people on the issue and monitor such activity. We are not naive – there will always be cheaters in sport because this is human nature. Our job is to make it as difficult as possible for such cheaters to prosper and to dissuade as many other athletes as possible from even considering bending the rules.

SR: What will be the highlight of London 2012 for you?

DO: As the president of the International Rowing Federation, I am looking



Sebastian Coe, Denis Oswald and IOC President Jacques Rogge (l - r)
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forward to seeing some fantastic performances at Eton Dorney. If I look at the bigger picture, I think people will be impressed to see the world's best athletes competing in all the outstanding new venues, as well as in front of some of the most iconic buildings in Britain. The Games will create a unique atmosphere around the country and I believe we will truly see a "Great" Britain this summer.

And finally...**A new Swiss Club for Somerset?**

Christiane Greening-Knoepfli (originally from Geneva) recently moved to Taunton, Somerset, with her husband, Derek, a retired solicitor.

They are very keen to meet any Swiss living in the Taunton area with a view to forming a new Swiss Club in Somerset.

Please contact Christiane on: 01823327308.

Impressum**How to contact the editor**

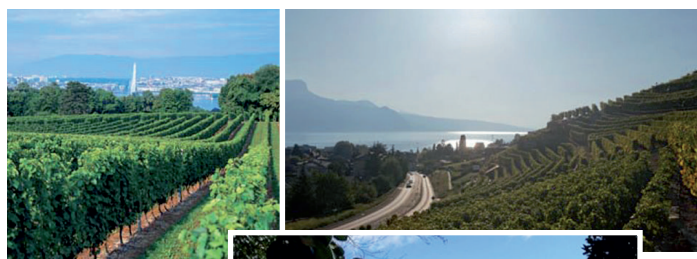
Reports of Swiss society activities, news, coming events, correspondence, articles and advertising for the 'Switzerland in the UK' section of the Swiss Review, should go to the editor:

Andrew Littlejohn
81 Brondesbury Road
London, NW6 6BB
Tel: 020 7372 3519
Email: editor@swissreview.co.uk

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Urs Mattmann
MBACP(Accred) DipTherapist

Counselling/Therapy
Supervision/Coaching
in Swiss-German, German
or English.

Contact
Tel. 075 9678 3506
Email: umattmann@btinternet.com
Details www.ursmattmann.com