

REGIONAL EDITION

UNITED KINGDOM & IRELAND

EDITORIAL

Dear readers, we are all still waiting to discover the outcome of the next Brexit vote. This current month will be decisive and we invite you to always consult the website of the Embassy, its social media profiles and possibly contact the Honorary Consulate of your area of residence. The Swiss authorities are constantly monitoring every development concerning the protection and security of Swiss citizens' rights. I also invite you to read the latest information from the Embassy published on this first page.

■ *This February the Unione Ticinese London reached its 145-year-old milestone. This impacted on the whole UK community because this is the oldest Swiss Society registered in the country and has strongly contributed to the Swiss historical heritage in London! There have been great celebrations at the Embassy which we report on in this issue, along with many other insights regarding the lively life of our local community. Enjoy your reading!*



GIOIA PALMIERI,
«UK & IRELAND PAGES»

EMBASSY NEWS: SWISS-UK CITIZENS' RIGHTS AGREEMENT

At the end of February the Swiss-UK citizens' rights agreement was signed in Berne by State Secretary Mario Gattiker and Chris Heaton-Harris, a Minister at the Department for Exiting the European Union.

The signing marked the conclusion of the Swiss government's 'mind the gap' strategy for securing relations with the UK after Brexit, with all agreements now in place and covering both deal and no-deal Brexit scenarios.

The settled status application process which Swiss citizens living in the UK will need to complete is the same regardless of the Brexit scenario, and Swiss citizens will be able to apply from the end of March when the system goes fully live. Since we last wrote to you on these pages, the UK government has abolished the fee for all settled status applications.

You'll be able to complete the application form online, with support over the phone

or in person if needed. Trial phases including the current pilot have shown the process to be quick and straightforward in the vast majority of cases. When you apply, you'll need proof of your identity (valid passport or national identity card) and your residence in the UK.

We've updated the FAQs on our website to reflect the latest developments, so please visit www.eda.admin.ch/london/brexit in the first instance with any questions you have. You'll also find a link to a video Q&A in which Ambassador Fasel gave a detailed update and addressed questions covering many different personal circumstances and all Brexit scenarios.

Whatever the outcome of the Brexit process, we remain committed to seeking the smoothest and strongest possible relationship between Switzerland and the UK. With the conclusion of the 'mind the gap' agreements, we have ensured continuity and are confident that we have laid the groundwork for a close partnership in the future.

EMBASSY OF SWITZERLAND IN THE UK



State Secretary Mario Gattiker and Chris Heaton-Harris, Minister at the Department for Exiting the European Union with their teams and the British Ambassador to Switzerland, Jane Owen, at the signature of the citizens' rights agreement in Berne on 25th of February.

LONDON: THE 145TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER OF THE UNIONE TICINESE



On 8th February 1874 a group of Italian Swiss restaurant owners and waiters met to formally found a Benevolent Society, the Unione Ticinese. 145 years and one day later, on 9th of February, over 70 members and their guests met at the Swiss Embassy to celebrate the event with food, wine, music and, of course, a raffle!

There were representatives of some of the original members' families as well as descendants of other 'old' Anglo-Ticinese families. However there was fresh blood too in the form of Ticinesi who had settled in the UK in recent decades and people who had recently discovered their Ticinese roots, together with friends from other Swiss societies. We were the guests of the Ambassador, His Excellency Alexandre Fasel, our Honorary President, and his wife Nicole Fasel-Rossier. Other guests of honour were Gran Consigliere Bixio Caprara, representing the government of Ticino, and Manuela

Bechtiger-Salvadè and Giampietro Gianella of Pro Ticino, of which we are an associate member.

The dinner took place in the Embassy's lecture theatre, adorned with the Society's much-loved silk banner of 1924, to the backdrop of popular Ticinese tunes played by 'Rolando e Lorenzo' alias Rolando Rigotti and Lorenzo Bonati on the accordion and guitar. Each table had a white orchid, draped with the red and blue colours of Ticino, and a special eight-page commemorative menu. This, with the invitation which doubled as a raffle ticket, belong to a tradition stretching back to at least 1903.

The meal was accompanied by abundant quantities of red and white Ticinese wine, from the Mendrisio house of Valsangiacomo. After the main course, there were the speeches. The Ambassador spoke first, proposing the health of our guests, but also delivering a surprise. He summarised the contents of the British-Swiss accord that had just been concluded and would come into force once the UK left the EU: it



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- 1: Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis send a message to Unione Ticinese.
- 2: Embassy's venue.
- 3: Each table had a orchid draped with the red and blue colours of Ticino.
- 4: Ambassador address at the beginning.
- 5: UTL Committee.
- 6: Rita Day, President of UTL.
- 7: Bixio Caprara member of the Ticino's Parliament.
- 8: The Society's silk banner of 1924.
- 9: Popular Ticinese tunes played by Rolando Rigotti and Lorenzo Bonati.
- 10: Mr Gianella, Mrs Day, Ambassador Fasel and his wife Mrs Nicole Fasel-Rossier, Mrs Bechtiger-Salvadè and Mr Caprara.



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represented a 'first', he said, and meant that the Swiss did not need to be worried should there be a No-Deal Brexit. Bixio Caprara spoke about the ambitious development plans of the Federal Sports Centre in Tenero, for which he is responsible. He also had a surprise in the form of a video containing personal greetings to us, on our anniversary, from the Swiss Foreign Minister, Ignazio Cassis, himself a Ticinese. Then Manuela Bechtiger-Salvadé toasted the Unione Ticinese on behalf of Pro Ticino and Giampietro Gianella presented our President with a handsome silver gilt medal of 2003 commemorating the centennial of canton Ticino. A little later, Ian Giuliani thanked the organisers and, in a topical reference, reminded all present that the Unione Ticinese had originally been a society for poverty-stricken immigrants to the UK.

At the end of the meal the raffle, which included Swiss railway tickets, a luxurious hamper, a special Victorinox pen knife and vanity products, was drawn by Mme Fasel. After that it was back to music and dancing until well after 11 pm, with grappa lavishly and spontaneously

supplied by the Ambassador. As a final flourish of generosity, every guest received a well-stocked goody bag as they departed.

Over the following days we received messages from some people who had never been to a Unione Ticinese function before, remarking on its exceptional 'heart' and warmth. This was perhaps the compliment that pleased the organisers most. The Unione Ticinese is no longer a Benevolent Society. The balance of its membership has altered over time, as has many of its activities, but if we lose our heart we shall no longer deserve to survive. On to 2024 and our 150th anniversary!

PETER BARBER

Further information:
www.utl.org.uk
 f @UnioneTicinese
 t @UT_London



UTL PRESIDENT: 'We must start looking at the 150th anniversary'

Rita Day, you've been the ULT president during the last two years. What did impress you more regarding this celebration?

First of all, the very good turn out, 76 in all. We only had room for 80 anyway! From the beginning the people helping to put this event together, did not spare time to make things happen. The presence of the Ambassador provided standing. At the same time, he and his wife's relaxed and friendly attitude helped to warm up the atmosphere and make us all feel comfortable. Everything was so so lively that at the end people got up to dance. Carriages were delayed until after 11 pm.

The 150th anniversary is not far, what do you wish for the future of UTL?

On the basis of the recent success, we must start looking at the 150th. Lots of ideas already. In the meantime, we would like to enlarge our membership. If you know of any Ticinesi in London, do encourage them to come to us, please.

LONDON: THE PROGRAMME FOR THE UPCOMING 54TH CONGRESS OF THE SWISS SOCIETY IN THE UK

It is with great excitement that we are announcing the programme for the upcoming 54th Congress of the Swiss Society in the UK (FOSSUK) which will take place in London from the 17th to the 19th of May 2019.

The AGM of FOSSUK will be held at the *Swiss Embassy on Saturday, 18th May 2019*. The meeting will commence at 2pm, with registration opening at 1.30pm.

We are pleased to announce the presence of *His Excellency Ambassador Fasel* alongside representatives from the Swiss Embassy and from the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. With great pleasure, we will also be welcoming the director of the Organisation of Swiss Abroad (OSA) Ariane Rustichelli and the UK delegates to the Council of the Swiss Abroad.

The activities will continue with a cultural programme, which will commence at 4.30pm. This will start with an introduction of the work the UK-based Swiss artist, painter and writer, Alexandra Lavizzari. This will be followed by a drinks reception kindly offered by HE Ambassador Fasel and entertainment from singer Elena Flury.

In the evening of Friday 17th May participants are invited to gather in the iconic Flagship store of Victorinox in New Bond Street where



they will be introduced to Neil Heritage. Neil is a motivational speaker who will talk about his time in the army, losing both legs following a suicide bomb attack and his remarkable recovery. Participants will be inspired by his resilience and his attempts to be the first person with his disability to summit the iconic Matterhorn in the Alps.

Throughout the evening participants will have the opportunity to enjoy a glass of Prosecco or Swiss Beer and taste some unique Swiss cheeses whilst admiring the exhibition of professional alpine photographer Fiona Bunn. The evening is supported by the Swiss Club 'New Helvetic Society' and 'Swiss Quality UK'.

The cultural programme resumes on Sunday 19th May morning where the participants will be guided through a special tour of London. Peter Barber, historian of the British Library and member of the 'Unione Ticinese London', will guide us as we discover the Swiss heritage and Swiss historical contribution to the Capital.

FRANZ MUHEIM, FOSSUK PRESIDENT

All event details and booking information can be found on the FOSSUK website:
www.swiss-societies.co.uk

WALES: AMBASSADOR FASEL WELCOMED BY THE WELSH AUTHORITIES AND LOCAL SWISS COMMUNITY



Mr Fasel with Eluned Morgan AM, Minister for International Relations at the Welsh Assembly, Cardiff.

It's a key priority for Ambassador Fasel to travel out of London as often as possible and in particular to make regular visits to Wales and other Consular centres in the United Kingdom.

On the 5th February 2019 Ambassador Fasel visited Wales for the fourth time since he started his appointment in London in September 2017. A packed agenda awaited him as always! This time Ambassador Fasel began his visit at the Royal Mint in Llantrisant near Cardiff where he was given an interesting and informative private tour of their visitor centre 'The Royal Mint Experience' and was able to strike his own coin. From The Royal Mint he travelled to the Senedd (Welsh Assembly) in Cardiff Bay to pay a courtesy call to the new First Minister of

Wales, Mark Drakeford AM. Ambassador Fasel discussed a wide range of issues with the First Minister including Brexit. At the Senedd the Ambassador also met with Eluned Morgan AM, the new Minister for International Relations, to discuss links between Switzerland and Wales and explore closer co-operation in the economic field, capitalising on Welsh expertise in the cyber security sector and Switzerland's high-tech industries.

The visit to Wales concluded with an evening event held at the offices of Capital, the location of the Consulate of Switzerland in Cardiff, where the Ambassador spoke on the impact of Brexit on Switzerland to a packed and appreciative professional audience.

RUTH THOMAS-LEHMANN
CONSULATE OF SWITZERLAND IN CARDIFF, WALES

INSPIRATIONAL ISLAND: THE COUNTRY I HAD IMAGINED

My love affair with England began a long time ago, in my teens, when I discovered the novels of Thomas Hardy, the Bronte sisters and many others.

The world these authors opened up for me was wildly romantic and tragic, full of natural beauty and cosy little hamlets where people did heroic deeds but always found the time to have a cup of tea and scones in lovely cottages and manors. Truly a very strange but fascinating world! I promised myself that one day I would explore this wonderful island or even live there – but of course, life decided otherwise. It sent me to Asia and Italy instead, which I don't regret, but then, after 25 years, something like a miracle happened and a change of circumstances made me move to the very island I had had dreams about so many times. That was ten years ago, and my love affair is still going strong.

Needless to say that I didn't find the country I had imagined for half of my life; there were delayed trains, traffic jams, littered streets and draughty houses, things never mentioned in those books. But never mind: What I have found in the course of the following years instead has, in the end, proven to be much more valuable for me than the realisation of a dream, namely a wealth of inspiration for my writing and painting. I am lucky to live in Somerset not far from the border with Devon, two counties well known for their great diversity of landscapes; from lush valleys to wild moors and



Image Top:
'Goltha Falls' on
Bodmin Moor.

Image right:
A view of Dartmoor
in autumn.



Starting with this issue we will publish a periodical author's column titled 'Inspirational Island' with the aim to inspire our readers who are actually living in the UK.

Alexandra Lavizzari is born in Basel where she studied ethnology and Islamic studies. She is a mother of three children who as diplomat's wife has constantly traveled out of the country and has lived in Kathmandu, Islamabad, Bangkok and Rome.

Her books can be ordered on zytlogge.ch

More info about her art:

alexandra1108.wixsite.com/alexazari

stretches of coasts with sandy beaches and dramatic cliffs: they have it all. And being at my doorstep, I can explore them to my heart's desire.

I am a writer by profession and had always thought that I would stick to words as my chosen tool to express my feelings and ideas in form of stories and novels. But when I arrived in England and started to go for extensive walks and to read about the places I visited, I started to feel that I needed to try other tools as well, tools with a more imme-

diate and spontaneous impact, and so one day I bought paints, brushes and canvases and started to paint what I was experiencing around me. At the beginning it was a very strange experience to go back to an art form which I had abandoned a long time ago, but now I have found a balance between writing and painting which gives me pleasure as well as a great sense of fulfilment – and this in great part thanks to the country I call my home today.

ALEXANDRA LAVIZZARI

SWISS CHURCH IN LONDON: 2019 A YEAR OF NEW CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

It has been a busy start to 2019 at the Swiss Church in London. Our Minister Revd. Carla Maurer has returned from her maternity leave. Her son Yuvi Mark, born in July, is a big hit with the congregation.

We have said farewell to our Sabbatical Minister Revd Meret Engel from Romanshorn and her historian and organist husband Daniel Engeli. They enthusiastically threw themselves into a host of activities from day one of their five-month joint sabbatical. We miss them a lot. During 2018, the church welcomed a number of professionals and students from Switzerland on sabbatical or as interns, among

them Ministers, primary teachers and high school pupils as young as 17. We love to offer the chance to experience the unique Swiss Church from the inside and spend time in one of the world's most vibrant cities. If you, members of your family or friends are interested in doing something similar, why not get in touch with us.

Recently, we have been asked to hold baptism services on a Saturday, so that relatives and friends can travel more easily from Switzerland and from around the globe. So, on Saturday 13 April we will be holding a baptism service on a Saturday. There is still time for you to have your own child baptised at that service. Contact Carla by email or at the church office for further details.

(carla.maurer@swisschurchlondon.org.uk or 0207 836 1418).

In 2019, we also welcome Peter Staeuber as President of the Consistoire, that is to say, the governing body of the Swiss Church in London, which is registered as a charity in the UK, under English law. Peter is from St Gallen. He moved to London in 2010 and joined the Consistoire in



2017 taking a particular interest in the church's outreach work among the homeless. We are grateful to Peter for taking on this important new role. Peter is currently the London correspondent for WOZ, the Zurich weekly newspaper, and for the German online-news website zeit.de. He has also just published his latest book 'Sackgasse Brexit: Reportagen aus einem gespaltenen Land'. Copies are available from Peter peter.staeuber@gmail.com.

As a lively community hub for the Swiss community, the Swiss Church heavily relies on volunteers to organise successful events such as the annual 1st August celebrations or the Samichlaus celebration in December. If you able to help, please contact us now!

CARLA MAURER



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FOSSUK WEBSITE

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



Can't find the articles & pictures you submitted to the SR? Look no further! Go to: www.swiss-societies.co.uk

YORKSHIRE: JEFFREY LONG'S 100 MILE WALK

Jeffrey Long from Bingley – popular and active member of the Yorkshire Swiss Club has successfully completed a 100-mile walk along the south coast raising more than £27,000 for the Royal British Legion last November.

He had raised £25,000 but a quick appeal on Twitter saw support pour in from all over the world swelling the pot to £27,000 in just 24 hours. Jeffrey Long MBE, Former Paratrooper and Life Member of the Royal British Legion, in his 88th year went for a 20 miles walk a day last year.

Starting at Sandwich on 6th November he walked 100 miles to Newhaven arriving just before 11am on Armistice Day to lay a wreath marking 100 years since the end of World War One. During his walking he also had the privileged to ride in the Royal Saloon once used by our Royal Patron The Queen in the 1950s, on the 8th Nov 2018. His aim was to walk 10 miles at 10 different RAF stations to raise funds for the RAF Benevolent Fund and Support Paras. This is the second time that Jeffrey has 'gone viral' – in 2017 a Twitter intervention by Jason Manford helped him to raise £120,000 for the armed forces community. Well done (again) Jeffrey!



SCOTLAND: THE 'SWISS-RED' TARTAN

In response to the last Vicki's cartoon (see the imagine) we can proudly confirm that a Swiss-Tartan does really exist.

The president of the ABERDEEN SWISS CLUB is one of the few in the world who has one and explained its history to the SR: in 2006 the government of Switzerland was represented by Mr Bruno Widrig as a Consul General in Edinburgh. The five Swiss clubs in Scotland very much appreciated that the Swiss official was coming closer to their members. In this period the Consul General also initiated that a Swiss Tartan called 'Swiss Red' was created. The Scottish colours are blue and white as the Swiss one's are white and red. Therefore the Swiss Tartan represents these three colours to symbolise the special friendship between Scotland and Switzerland. Consul General Bruno Widrig was wearing the kilt during the opening of the Consulate in Edinburgh and later donned his one for the media at the foot of Edinburgh Castle. At the moment, 'Swiss Red' exists only in a sample version woven at the Edinburgh Old Town Weaving Company, located on The Royal Mile between Holyrood Palace and Edinburgh Castle.

At that the time, the only people sporting the Swiss tartan were the Swiss Consul General in Edinburgh and his wife; and our friend Mr Peter Luedi!



President of the Aberdeen Swiss Club Peter Luedi with his original Swiss tartan.



MANCHESTER SWISS CLUB

Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Relief Society and the Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Club Manchester will be held on Friday 5th April at 8.00 p.m. at The Brookdale Club, Bramhall. The committee will provide sandwiches and soft drinks and tea/coffee at the end of the meeting. Subscriptions for the Swiss Relief Society and Swiss Club Manchester are now available. Those who are interested in them can write an email to ftblum@gmail.com or write to Mrs Lola Cheetham, 17 Broadoak Road, Bramhall, Stockport SK7 3BW.

WEST SURREY SWISS CLUB

Members of West Surrey Swiss Club will celebrate our 25th anniversary this year with about 8 functions! Our loyal members even travel from remove other counties to be with us! The first meeting will be on 16 February when we will play skittles in the Bulls Head, Ewhurst and enjoy lunch together. It is a good occasion to enjoy one another's company. Reports on our activities will follow as the year goes by.

VIKI: A cartoon for the Swiss in the UK



www.vikicartoons.com

f @Vikicartoons

Alternative snowman building... a popular winter activity in Wales.

SWISS SAYINGS: Lost in translations

‘De ischem Herrgott/Tuefel abem Charra gheit!’

These are two variants of a saying with distinctly different meanings: the first one signifies that somebody’s quiet life has come to an abrupt end, whereas the second version means that somebody outwitted death and is still alive against all odds. The 19th century author Jeremias Gotthelf, for example, mentions this saying in chapter 9 of his book *‘Die Käseerei in der Vohfreude’*: *‘Die Liserlise im Bohnenloch kennen alle, wenn eine dem Teufel vom Karren gefallen ist, so ist es sie.’*

An interesting detail is that ‘charra’ is an Italian loan word from ‘Carretta’ or from the Latin ‘Carrus’. These sayings could be best rendered as:

In French and Italian, this would mean respectively:

French: De ischem Herrgott abem Charra gheit!: *‘il l’a échappé belle’* – De ischem Tuefel abem Charra gheit!: *‘Prendre le mauvais chemin’*

Italian: De ischem Herrgott abem Charra gheit!?: *‘L’ha scampata per un pelo’* – De ischem Tuefel abem Charra gheit!: *‘È finito sulla brutta strada’*

BEATRICE SCHEGEL, TRANSLATOR

FIONA: The view from the top

For more of her work, visit:

www.fiphotos.org

f @FiAlpinePhotos

t @alpineclick

ig @FiAlpinePhotos



Chamois on the Gornergrat at dawn



Three 4,000 metre giants (Ober Gabelhorn, Zinalrothorn and Weisshorn)

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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