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Main Feature

SWITZERLAND GEARS UP FOR THE VOTE

Federal elections will be held in Switzerland on October 23rd. With only a few months until polling day, what are the main talking points on the streets of Bern, Zurich and Geneva? Who are the main beneficiaries of the current political debate? And who is going to be playing catch-up?

Clive Church, Emeritus Professor of European Studies at the University of Kent and one of the founding members of the university's Centre for Swiss Politics gives his impression of the political climate in Switzerland following a recent visit.

Arriving in Fribourg on the day of communal elections one cannot help being struck by the total absence of popular interest visible bar a few posters defaced. Declining turn out figures show that this is not a misguided impression. And it all reinforces outside views that Swiss general elections don't really matter.

Yet the parties are all now setting out their stalls, furnished with natty slogans like 'For Love of Switzerland' (from the Radicals) and 'For Everyone, no Privileges' (from the Social Democrats) on

the assumption that the elections do matter. They are all having to react to the Japanese nuclear crisis which is leading to wild calls for an immediate end to nuclear power in Switzerland and which could possibly upset the whole applecart and propel the Liberals and the Greens past the right-wing Swiss People's Party (SVP)

Although it is often dangerous to prophesy dramatic change in Switzerland, this may not be true of the



The parties are all now setting out their stalls, furnished with natty slogans

forthcoming elections. Why? After decades of apparent stability the last twelve years or so have seen marked changes in the balance and tone of Swiss politics. The Swiss People's Party has risen from being the smallest



of the four governing parties to be the biggest and the one which sets the political agenda. And this October it could well pass the symbolic 30% level. This would not allow it to form a government on its own, or even to dictate the passing of all legislation, but it would surely affect the formation of the new Federal Council. And this is sure to be a bitter affair. Moreover, attitudes towards education, Europe, foreigners, health, Islam not to mention law and order could all change if the party's influence grows.

This might not help Switzerland's image abroad. So it is probably worth turning out to vote, whatever your sympathies, even if the present timid experiments with both new social media and electronic voting are not as helpful to the Swiss abroad as they have been made out to be.

Federal Elections 2011

Your vote counts!

Make sure you are on the electoral roll in Switzerland if you wish to play an active role in our country's political life and debate.

For detailed information and how to register please go to:

www.swissembassy.org.uk/eda/en/home/repes/eur/vgbr/ref_livfor/livgbr/ukcsrg/votlon.html

www.aso.ch/en/consultation/living-abroad/political-rights/to-voting-and-electing

www.swissinfo.org

www.swisscommunity.org



With your help the UK pages of the Swiss Review intends to put together a manifesto of the issues most pressing to you.

The five-point plan will be submitted to the FOSSUK committee to pass on to the Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad in Bern.

Put forward your ideas for the Election Manifesto!

Email: editor@swissreview.co.uk

Write to: Swiss Review, 81 Brondesbury Road, London, NW6 6BB; Tel: 020 7372 3519

What are some of the issues concerning you as a Swiss person living abroad?

What changes would you like to see introduced as a result of the upcoming election? Is the federal policy on the Swiss abroad coherent and coordinated? Are finances divided up fairly?

Editorial

Dear Readers,



First of all, thank you for the support many of you have shown as I prepared my first issue of the Swiss Review. Your input and advice has been invaluable. I have been a keen reader of the Swiss Review for many years and realize its importance to the Swiss community here. I hope you will find this issue and those to come just as relevant to your life here in the UK as before.

In this issue, the Swiss international footballer Bruno Berner considers Switzerland's chances in the closing stages of the Euro 2012 qualifying round. Swiss politics specialist, Clive Church, offers his impression of the mood in Switzerland as the nation gears up to go to the polls. We look at what featured in these pages back in 1977 and with the sweltering summer sun already beating down in many parts of the country, readers take us on a whistlestop tour of the UK, sharing their favourite local landmarks and must-see sights.

Andrew Littlejohn

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THE EXCHANGE

It is not often that Embassy employees have the chance to swap jobs, but that is exactly what is happening later this year between Eduard (or Edi to most who know him) Krall, Consul General at the Embassy of Switzerland in London and his Washington counterpart, Margrit Ledermann-Prestofelippo. The two Consul Generals agreed to share some of their initial email exchanges with Swiss Review as they prepare for the move.

Dear Margrit,
I hear you are to replace me in August. What a coincidence. We are actually swapping jobs. That doesn't happen very often. Washington was my first choice. Are you looking forward to coming to London?

Best regards,
Edi - Eduard Krall
Consul General, Embassy of Switzerland, London

Dear Edi,
I am very excited about my new job. London was also my first choice, so I am very happy it worked out well for both of us.

I have so many questions to ask! Where do you and your colleagues live in London? Do you live in houses or apartments? You will probably want to live in a lovely house with a nice garden either in D.C or in one of the attractive suburbs, such as Chevy Chase and Bethesda in Maryland, northwest D.C.
Best wishes,
Margrit
Margrit Ledermann-Prestofelippo
Consul General, Embassy of Switzerland, Washington

Dear Margrit,
Thanks for the tips. Most of our Embassy staff lives in apartments around Marble Arch and Marylebone. It's within walking distance of the embassy. Will there be a lot to keep me and my wife busy at the weekends in Washington?

Time Out magazine gives a fantastic weekly overview of what is going on here. We always enjoy a walk along the Thames. It's full of contrasts - always very entertaining around Embankment and the Millennium Wheel (a must-do ride, even if just once!), and then following the river south-west towards Richmond you would think you were in the country.
Edi

Dear Edi,
I always knew London would be full of contrasts. I don't know where to begin with recommendations for Washington. Obviously there's the White House and then all the "Smithsonian Museums" (about 18 of them and free of charge). Will you miss London? I'm going to miss the beautiful blue skies here and wonderful climate, except August, when you cannot sit outside without being eaten up by mosquitoes (at least, they liked me very much...)
Best wishes,
Margrit

Hello Margrit,
I am going to miss a good old English pub lunch! Fish and chips or steak and kidney pie are my favourites!
How active is the Swiss community in the US?
There are almost 30,000 Swiss registered with the Embassy here and roughly 50 Swiss clubs.



The Victoria Pub near Paddington station in London

Dear Edi,
We have around 75,000 Swiss registered at the various Consulates General. About 4,000 are registered here in the capital. Swiss National Day is our biggest annual event and you are in the right place if you love rifle shooting. Oh yes, I nearly forgot, the folk dancing group is already very excited about meeting you (they are always on the look-out for more men...)!
Margrit

Dear Margrit,
Thanks for the tip off! And maybe I should warn you...it's a tradition here at the Embassy (honest!) that newcomers prepare the Christmas Luncheon for the entire staff and offer some entertainment on the side!



Here's to a stress-free move and a jolly ho! ho! ho! Christmas...
Best wishes and a safe journey,

Edi - Eduard Krall
Consul General, Embassy of Switzerland, London

I have no doubt you'll be invited to the St Moritz fondue restaurant in Soho, an old Stammlokal for many here.
Edi

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Travel Feature

TOP TRAVEL TIPS FOR OUR READERS BY OUR READERS

London's iconic department store, Harrods, was given a complete Swiss makeover in April. The Knightsbridge store was chosen for the massive summer promotion of Switzerland Tourism because it is a landmark in the British capital and attracts thousands of visitors every week. London has a wealth of landmarks from St Paul's Cathedral to Big Ben and Buckingham Palace. How does a building or a place become a landmark – a must-see spot for tourists? According to Marcelline Kuonen, Director of Switzerland Tourism, it has to have something extraordinary and then with the right marketing and the benefits of word of mouth it can develop into a major tourist attraction. Here three readers share their favourite local “landmarks”, which never fail to impress visiting friends and family.

Cribarth in the Swansea Valley

About 20 miles outside of Swansea and stretched along the horizon in the Swansea valley is Cribarth mountain, also known as the “Sleeping Giant”. Friends say it reminds them of the “Napoleon” near the Walensee.

Cribarth is often quiet when Pen y Fan, the highest peak in south Wales, is groaning under the weight of visitors. All the climbing is done within the first half hour. The views are breathtaking and it is a good place to see red kites. We allow at least three hours for the walk and always take mountain boots and waterproofs with us. A map is essential, especially for the footpaths through the fields. Our reward at the end of the hike is a pint in either of the two local pubs, the Pen y Cae or the Ancient Briton. **Angus Riddell**

Lynmouth funicular

Living near the picturesque North Devon coast it is always a delight to take friends on the Lynton to Lynmouth funicular. All Swiss are familiar with funiculars, but a short trip on this delightful little railway never fails to impress our guests. It was constructed in 1888 and had been born out of the great inconvenience of the 862-foot drop to the bay below. The most fascinating fact of this funicular is that it is powered entirely from water! The breathtaking trip brings you down to Lynmouth, at the mouth of the East and West Lyn Rivers – a charming North Devon seaside



Lynmouth Funicular

resort, harbour and former fishing village. A meal at the ‘Rising Sun’, a 14th Century, thatched, smugglers’ inn overlooking the harbour bay guarantees to satisfy the most discerning of palates! **Erika Farwell-Meier**

London's East End

Columbia Road Flower Market is ideal for a lazy Sunday morning. Watching the traders shouting their wares electrifies the atmosphere and always brings a smile to the faces of visiting friends and relatives as we cram between the multitude of local flowers, herbs and plants on display. I've lost count of how often we have found little gems in the bric-a-brac shops, small galleries and pop-up bookshops in the nearby side streets. After indulging ourselves with beautifully decorated mini-cupcakes, we head over to the world-famous 24-hour bagel shop on Brick Lane for a salted beef bagel – there are no eating rules on a Sunday! Happily munching on the stacked bagel we gawk at street sellers peddling their unwanted belongings directly off the pavement. The day often ends with a spot of bowling at All Star Lanes. Bliss! **Ané-Mari Peter**

Do you have a local landmark you would like to share with us?
Email: editor@swissreview.co.uk
Write to: Swiss Review, 81 Brondesbury Road, London, NW6 6BB; Tel: 020 7372 3519



London's East End

Views along the Swansea Valley



Snapshot

Helvetic Airways launch in Cardiff (30th March 2011)



Swiss passengers welcomed to Wales by local primary school children



Celebrations to mark the start of the Zurich route



Children welcoming the arrival of the first Helvetic Airways flight



Helvetic Airways passenger chatting to Creigiau Primary School children

FOSSUK

DEAR READERS

On behalf of the Editorial Committee I am delighted to commend to you this first issue of the UK pages of the Swiss Review edited by Andrew Littlejohn. As you can see, the layout of the publication has also been redesigned with the creative input of Marc Peter.

The reason for these changes, as many of you will know, was the sudden death last October of Derek Meakin. Derek's keen interests in all things Swiss together with his boundless energy and enthusiasm have been reflected in the UK pages since 1995 when he took over as Editor. His involvement with the publication however goes back as far as the "Swiss Observer". His input over the years has been immeasurable!

I would also like to express our gratitude to the Meakin family for their support and help in these past months which ensured a smooth and easy transition. A special mention and thank you go to Julian Marshal - his long involvement with the Swiss Review will not be forgotten. This is also the time when we would like to

remember everybody who has been involved in one form or another in getting the UK pages to our readers. Thank you also to Jeffrey Long who, after years of being Advertising Manager for the UK pages, did much to produce the first two issues of 2011. We are very grateful that the finances of the UK pages have been in the safe hands of Erika Farwell for many years. Sadly, Erika's services have become "surplus to requirement" due to a change in the accounting system.

It is now my happy task to wish Andrew all the very best in his new venture and let him get on with putting "pen to paper" and sharing his new project with us. **Margrit Lyster**

Swiss Club News

This column is for you. Tell us about your news and events.

What was making the news in...

spring/summer 1977?

+++For the third time in seven years the Swiss people rejected an anti-foreign initiative, which could have seen the forced repatriation of 25,000 foreigners every year. With a referendum turnout of 80%, voters came out two to one against the idea, demonstrating that by carrying out their democratic duties they could influence the destiny of their country +++Gottfried Keller's "Letters from Switzerland" focused on the tarnished image of the Swiss banking system, in particular Credite Suisse. Managers

from the bank's Chiasso branch on the Swiss-Italian border were arrested after allegedly accepting "hot money" from Italy to the tune of 2,000 million SFr+++On the 26th April, 1977, London's Swiss Centre on Leicester Square celebrated the launch of Queen Elizabeth's Silver Jubilee festivities by laying on a mammoth display alongside its own tenth anniversary celebrations+++And the Swiss Rifle Association's AGM shot a bull's eye by opening its doors to women for the first time+++



SWISS NATIONAL DAY LONDON

A date not to forget!
Saturday 23 July 2011

The Swiss Community in London will celebrate the Swiss National Day at the University College London.

Watch this space for more details in the next issue of the Swiss Review or on www.swissnationalday.co.uk

c/o Embassy of Switzerland
16 - 18 Montagu Place
London W1H 2BQ

Swiss National Day 2011

Are you under 14?

The Swiss Review is looking for three young and enthusiastic photographers from different parts of the UK to capture the atmosphere of your local Swiss National Day festivities. If you are chosen, you will be sent a small disposable camera, which you can use to click away on at your National Day party. Have as much fun and be as creative as you like. Contact the editor and you may be seeing your favourite snaps in the next issue of the Swiss



Review or on our website: www.swissreview.co.uk

Email: editor@swissreview.co.uk
Write to: Swiss Review, 81 Brondesbury Road, London, NW6 6BB; Tel: 020 7372 3519

Snapshot

Switzerland in Harrods (1st - 28th April 2011)



Swiss cheese dominated in Harrods' world-famous Food Hall



A Taste of Switzerland takes prime position in the Food Hall



Swiss flags fly outside the iconic store in Knightsbridge



A Swiss horn blower performs at the opening festivities

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Embassy News

New work opportunities at the House of Switzerland

In just over one year's time, the Olympic Flame will light up London's Olympic Stadium and mark the beginning of the highly anticipated 2012 Summer Olympics and Paralympics.

The House of Switzerland, based at Glaziers Hall next to London Bridge, will act as the country's public face during the Games. It will be a meeting point for the Swiss Olympic team, sponsors and partners and will host medal ceremonies, exhibitions, cultural events, receptions and press conferences.

The House of Switzerland is looking for motivated staff to work in the areas of guest relations/ services, administration, as well as marketing & communication during the period from 14 July to 12 August 2012.

Further information and comprehensive job descriptions will be published on both the House of Switzerland website (currently under construction) and the Embassy's Website from mid-September 2011.



View across the Thames from the House of Switzerland

Sport

CAN SWITZERLAND LEAD WITHOUT A STRONG ATTACK?

Swiss international footballer Bruno Berner is one of Leicester City's most experienced players. He has sixteen caps for Switzerland and has played in a number of European leagues. With both England and Wales in the same Euro 2012 qualifying round, Bruno reflects on Switzerland's chances in Group G faced with the pace and physicality of the British squads on their home turf.

At the beginning of April, Switzerland's all-time top scorer Alex Frei and his experienced attacking partner, Marco Streller, announced their retirement from international football. Both men were vital for the success of Switzerland over the past decade.

Switzerland has always struggled to produce attacking players able to succeed on the international stage.



The strength of the British game is in its physicality and pace.

Now, suddenly two of them have resigned. What now? Who will fill the gap? The challenge in the second leg of the qualifying rounds of Euro 2012 will be how we attack. The strength of the British game is in its physicality and pace. Switzerland's focus is more on tactics and organisation. We try to build up the game while England and Wales play more direct and forward.

I recently talked to Andy King, one of my team mates at Leicester City,

The talented midfielder plays for the Welsh national team and is one of his country's great success stories. Wales are trailing in Group G, but Andy believes the early defeats were due to the unsettled environment and structure within the team. Under new manager, Gary Speed, there is a fresh and vibrant energy building for the next round of matches. Switzerland may not have it so easy at Cardiff's Millennium Stadium in October,

especially without the attacking duo Frei and Streller. But it should be an exciting match.

Whatever the result in Group G, it is important that the Swiss national team learns from these four games against England and Wales. We might have to play against Scotland, Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland in our next group stage for the World Cup 2014 in Brazil.



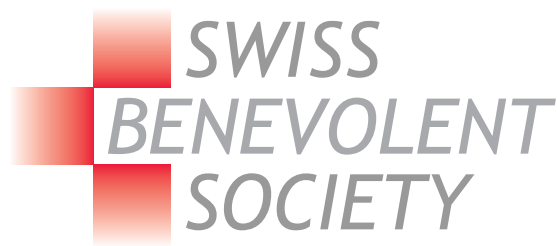
Swiss footballer Bruno Berner in action with Leicester City

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Five minutes with...

SHIRLEY BEGLINGER

Shirley Beglinger was recently appointed Chair of the UK Chapter of the British-Swiss Chamber of Commerce. Shirley has many years experience in underwriting and financial services and has been director of Shires Partnership Ltd since 2007. Shirley talked to Swiss Review about life in the male-dominated world of finance, her search for the right work-life balance and her aims as the new chair of BSCC.

Shirley Beglinger: It is well known London has a great deal to offer businesses. But it is our aim as the British Swiss Chamber of Commerce to lay a lot more emphasis on Britain and the regions. London is not England and England is not Great Britain. We plan to create a stronger presence in Scotland, bring a new dynamic to northern England, possibly with the focus initially on Manchester, and expand our connections in Cardiff.

Swiss Review: A publication you wrote a few years ago for the Centre for the Study of Financial Innovation was described as causing a stir in the insurance world. Do you plan to ruffle feathers at the BSCC?

SB: Probably not. Our role at the BSCC is to be useful to business and provoke a thoughtful debate, so there is limited scope for "revolution." There are enough important

“

Women bring a different and richer perspective to the workplace.

challenges for both Switzerland and the UK as we move forward. The chamber doesn't need to provoke anyone. One of our greatest challenges will be responding to Europe's plans to regulate the financial services market. Both countries play an influential role in the world of finance and each of us stands to be hurt equally if we don't have a strong response ready.

SR: The financial sector has always been described as male-dominated,

where after a certain level women face a glass ceiling. Is this still an issue?

SB: It's a problem if you allow it to be a problem. Women bring a different and richer perspective to the workplace. I admit though attitudes have revolutionised since I was starting out in business at the age of 20. Nobody sets out to create a glass ceiling. However, when most people seek to move up the career path, many women take time out to have a family. For those of us who choose differently, (not to take time out) we can often benefit from fewer women being in the senior echelons. Precisely that rareness allows a woman to take advantage of this opportunity.

SR: You are on a number of boards, you have set up your own consultancy firm, you write articles for financial magazines. How do you strike the right work-life balance?

SB: It's a question of self-discipline, which if I am honest I still haven't totally mastered. It is having the ability to close the door on the office and say it is my time now. Otherwise work just



Shirley Beglinger handing gifts to guests at a BSCC lunch

follows you and you're up at the crack of dawn. Working for a large company I used to find myself waking at 3 in the morning and already planning my day. As I get older I also get smarter and realise the world will keep turning even without my constant input.

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:

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Email: editor@swissreview.co.uk

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