

Switzerland in the UK

2/10

Canton Zug cashes in on UK tax bombshell

The success of one of Britain's top financial companies, Informa, in shifting its tax domicile to Switzerland could soon be followed by other major companies keen to find a new, low-tax home.

And officials in the Office for Economy and Labour in the tiny Canton of Zug are rubbing their hands with glee at the thought of more companies from the UK heading in their direction.

Informa, who also own the

international shipping bible Lloyd's List, says the move has saved it a cool £12 million a year. Four of its key executives, including the top man, Peter Rigby, have also moved to Zug with their wives.

The actual cost of the switch was £4.3 million, but the many advantages make it well worth while.

In addition to companies, there are many business chiefs now thinking of the desirability of setting up home in Switzerland. Their

interest was crystallised this month when those earning more than £150,000 a year started facing a tax bill up from 40 per cent to 50 per cent.

This has made London the most highly taxed financial centre in the world, with high earners being taxed higher than those in other key centres, such as Zurich and Geneva.

Until this month London was ranking sixth out of eight major financial centres in terms of the tax burden. Now it jumps to the top of the list, with any worker earning more than £500,000 facing the most onerous tax demand in the world.

Chief executive of broker Tullett Prebon said high taxes on workers and companies would only hinder Britain's economic recovery.

Now the firm has announced it will help its own employees move abroad if they want to avoid the high rate of tax.

Banks, too, have been complaining about the windfall tax on city bonuses, which imposes a 50 per cent one-off charge on any bonus they pay out over £25,000.

Swiss authorities, and not only in Zug, have not been slow in emphasising Switzerland's many attractions for the rich.

Top drawer estate agents like Aylesford International in London have been holding seminars, with its chairman, Andrew Langton, saying: "Switzerland is an accessible location in the centre of Europe, with a stable economy and a good selection of schools and housing.

"You're more likely to find what you want there than in any other tax haven."

But he also warns prospective movers: "Don't underestimate the culture shock, especially in German speaking cantons like Zug."

The canton, however, has its compensations – such as the lowest income tax in Switzerland. It works out at just 10 per cent on average.

• **There's more about Zug – in English – at www.Zug4you.ch.**

Nurse becomes a Dame



Claire Bertschinger has devoted her life to helping the sick in many deprived parts of the world. Now she has been made a Dame. Story on Page 2.

Realistic railways



All over Britain, enthusiastic amateurs are hard at work making the most detailed models of some of the iconic Swiss railways. See Pages 4-5.

Alphorns invade London



It's the march of the alphorns as more and more young British musicians discover what they can do with this most unusual Swiss import. Turn to Page 6.



Switzerland in the UK has its own Internet site, continually bringing you up to the minute news of the latest events as well as major stories from the most recent issues and links to other interesting sites in both the UK and Switzerland. To access it go to: www.swissreview.co.uk

News about any forthcoming events that will be of interest to our readers should be emailed to: editor@meakin.net

Swiss 'ship of the future' may visit the UK this year



It's taken just 13 months to build, but now one of the most remarkable Swiss inventions in the field of transport is almost ready for its historic launch. Called PlanetSolar, this sleek, 32 metre long catamaran is powered only by sunlight. If its sea trials are a success, it could pave the way for a completely new generation of shipping.

When he unveiled its futuristic design to the craft's backers – including the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and the cantons of Vaud and Neuchâtel – its inventor and skipper, Raphaël Domjan said: "D-day is coming. I can't wait to hold the controls in my hand. Each step in this project is a step further in the technological development of renewable energy sources. Scientific research is making progress."

After rigorous testing at sea PlantSolar will be going on a world tour, and it is expected the UK will be one of the first countries to be visited. It will have a crew of only two, but at each port 50 people will be invited to go on board for a short trip.

The multihulled vessel is 15 metres long and 7.5 metres high, and its deck is made up of 500 square metres of solar panels. It is expected to be able to sail silently at an average speed of eight knots.



SWISS NATIONAL DAY LONDON

The Swiss community and its friends are invited to celebrate the Swiss national day on **17.07.2010** starting at 3 pm at

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Two prominent Swiss in Honours List

Two leading members of the Swiss community have featured in this year's Honours List.

Nursing specialist and for many years a tireless Red Cross worker, Claire Bertschinger (*right*) has been made a Dame Commander of the British Empire. And Jeffrey Long (*below*), for 17 years President of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK and veteran charity worker, has been awarded the MBE.

Dame Claire, a dual national, is director for the diploma in tropical nursing at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, preparing nurses for work in hostile environments overseas.

She has close connections with the Swiss Church in London,



where her parents, brother and sister were married. And she herself lived and worked in Switzerland for many years.

• For more about her go to: www.swissreview.co.uk/story/386

Jeffrey Long, now in his 79th year, is a former paratrooper who in the last few years has taken part in many challenges and physical activities that belie his age.

In 2007 he walked 629 miles from London to Lausanne to raise funds for the Royal British Legion, which he completed in 39 days and raised more than £5,500.

His next charity walk will be 93 miles around London to raise funds for the Unione Ticinese Youth Fund, set up in memory of the late Peter Jacomelli.



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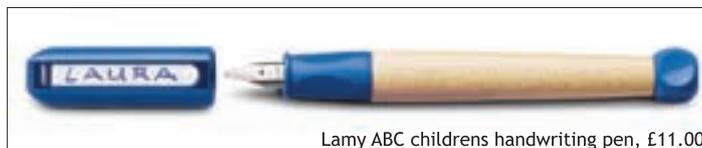
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Delights of Switzerland are only a click away

Are you a Swiss ambassador in all but name? You could be – with a little help from Switzerland Tourism.

They think that many of the 400,000 Swiss living abroad – including the 28,500 in the UK – can do a great job promoting the country to their friends and neighbours.

Switzerland's national tourism organisation has linked up with the Association of the Swiss Abroad with the aim of recruiting Swiss living overseas to become flag wavers for the country and its many tourist attractions.

They write: "Experience tells us that in living abroad you are an excellent ambassador for Switzerland.

"There are certainly many

opportunities to talk about Switzerland in your private or professional surroundings.

"Maybe you sometimes wished you had more pictures, films or posters of Switzerland. Or perhaps you could do with more information about the most spectacular hiking trails or the best restaurants in Switzerland. Maybe you are planning to visit Switzerland again very soon or are organising a trip for friends or colleagues.

"We are looking for committed Swiss expatriates who not only enjoy talking about their home country, but have lots of opportunities to do so.

"Members of Network Switzerland will receive a free 'Switzerland Promotion Kit'

containing photographs, talks, films and brochures as well as lots of interesting facts about Switzerland."

To learn more about this offer go to <http://www.aso.ch/en> and click on the 'My Switzerland' box.

After reading the 'Dear Swiss Expatriates' letter you will be invited to click on the 'Network Switzerland' link for further information.

Cultural Fund activities

The latest report of the Swiss Cultural Fund in Britain shows that during 2009 the fund supported 14 events in London compared to 39 in 2008.

There were also single events in Cambridge, Bristol, Manchester and Edinburgh, plus the regional tour of the Swiss Ambassador's Award Concert.

This summer the Edinburgh International Festival will feature concerts by the Elyma Ensemble and the Trio Zimmerman.

Details of all events can be found at the Fund's website: <http://www.scib.org.uk>.



How to contact the editor

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

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• The Swiss Review, with its 'Switzerland in the UK' supplement, is published four times a year – in January, April, August and October. The deadline for the next issue, to be published in August, is June 8.

London's new tourist director takes over



Switzerland Tourism has a new director of its office in London – 36 year old Valaisanne Marcelline Kuonen. She takes over from Evelyn Lafone, who has moved to Sydney in Australia to open the agency's first office there.

Marcelline (pictured above) was born in Guttet, a tiny village with just over 400 inhabitants perched at a height of 1,250 metres overlooking the town of Leuk.

She obtained her federal diploma at the Swiss Tourism School in Sierre, then worked as a sales and marketing manager in Martigny before moving to Switzerland Tourism in Zurich in 2000 to become assistant to the CEO.

Four years later she was appointed Switzerland Tourism's district manager in Berlin where she stayed six years before coming to London.

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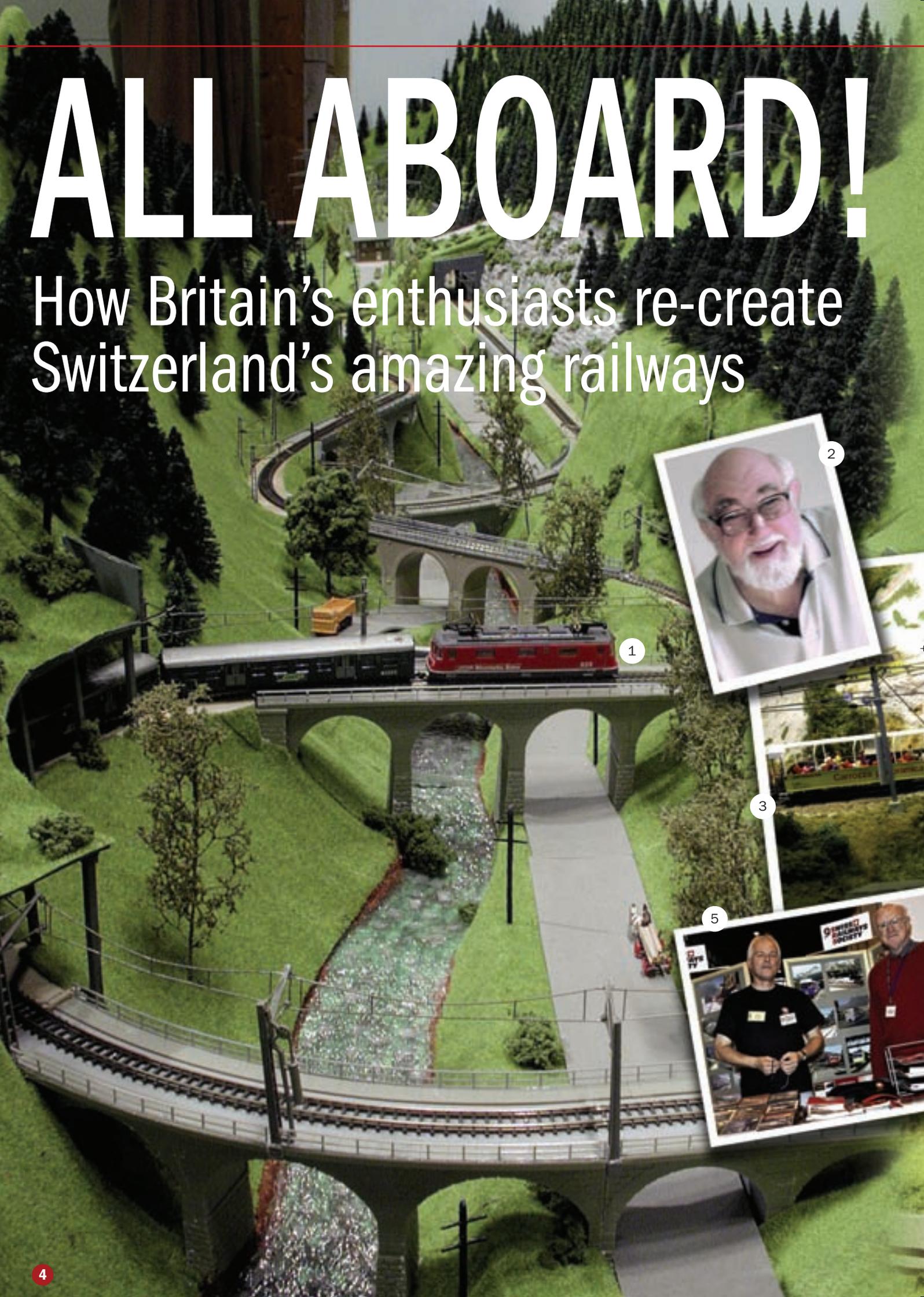
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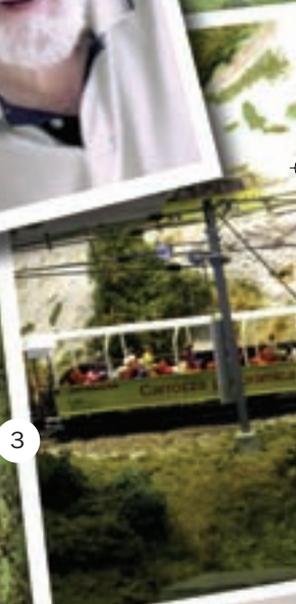
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All over Britain are groups of men whose lives seem to be dedicated to just one subject: The remarkable railways of Switzerland. You only have to meet any member of the Swiss Railways Society to realise not only how technically knowledgeable they are but how their whole being seems to be infused with the most catching enthusiasm.

And among them are many who also create in their own homes miniature replicas of the most picturesque lines, complete with towering mountains, flowing rivers, breathtaking viaducts and mysterious tunnels.

Our main picture shows an 18 ft long layout created by Piers Milne where everything has been made by hand, even the trains themselves. The scenery as been carved from polystyrene blocks, held together by plaster bandages and flocked with imitation grass. There are 800 trees, some made from small branches cut from a real miniature fir tree.

And this is just one of dozens of faithful reproductions that have been created by these dedicated enthusiasts in the last few years.

It's not only the scenery that is so realistic. The trains themselves are perfect replicas of the real thing. Locomotives have windscreen wipers. Carriages have interior lighting. There are even neatly printed destination boards alongside the doors.

And the colourful livery of the various lines is as

eye catching as it is in real life. Down to the distinctive advertising signs on the sides of the goods trains.

But model making is only a small part of the society's many activities.

Swiss Express, its 60 page quarterly magazine, is packed with news of what is happening throughout the extensive Swiss rail network. It goes into minute detail about timetable changes, passenger growth (or lack of it) on certain routes, money raised for new railway infrastructure, latest orders placed with train manufacturers, closure of little used lines and opening of new links.

In the very first issue of the magazine, in 1985, readers are invited to write in about interesting places to visit, noteworthy hotels and camping sites – "especially where they provide a good lineside location."

The society has nine branches, and there are well attended monthly meetings in Birmingham, Bath, Derby, Southampton, London, Manchester, Glasgow, Kidderminster, Newton Abbot and Leeds.

But sometimes they also have a day out nearer home. This June members of the West Midlands branch will be travelling en masse to take a ride to the summit of Snowdon on what they call the Welsh Brienz Rothorn Bahn. This line has four locos built in Winterthur in 1985-6 and still merrily puffing away.

Then in October the society will be taking over the

Kidderminster Railway Museum for the whole weekend. Details can be obtained from the society's secretary, David Stevenson, at bodensee.toggenburg@me.com.

Incidentally, David's email address is typical of how Swiss railways tend to affect members' lives. "It's my favourite Swiss railway company," he says, "and is now part of the Südostbahn in north eastern Switzerland."

• For more details about the society go to www.swissrailsoc.org.uk or write to membership officer Martin Fisher at 28 Appleton Lane, Redditch B97 6SE.

1 and 2. This grandiose layout shows the Rhaetische Bahn, climbing through the little station at Muot to the mouth of the Albula tunnel en route to St Moritz and the man who created it, Piers Milne.

3 and 4. Two layouts owned by Glyn Jones. The first shows a Railrider with open topped carriages starting on its thrilling journey down the Maloja Pass. The second has a double headed freight train with a load of postal wagons passing through Maloja station.

5. Two of the key players in the Swiss Railways Society: Roger Ellis, the publicity and exhibitions officer, and magazine editor Malcolm Bulpitt.

6. This train on the Bern-Lötschberg-Simplon line is typical of the high standard of the models, shown on a layout created by Peter Marriott.



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London comes alive – with the sound of alphorns

The gift of four alphorns to music colleges in London has led to a surge of interest in the instrument among music students, resulting in a growing number of appearances on concert platforms.

The benefactor was Rev John Wates, head of a charitable trust set up by the giant Wates Construction Group.

A lifelong lover of the alphorn, he had heard about Roger Zaneth in Yverdon, who had invented a lightweight, collapsible carbon fibre alphorn. He bought four which he gave to the Trinity College of Music, Royal College of Music and Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Since then they have been in great demand by various London orchestras, and have featured in Colourscape festivals all over the UK.

Last month horn player Marc Woodhurst took four young musicians to Turin for a special concert organised by Martin Mayes combining alphorns with French horns and featuring traditional Swiss melodies.

Said Martin: "For me the horn is an instrument which is all about space and movement. Audiences have found it emotionally powerful and have marvelled at how versatile these instruments can be."

What would be YOUR own favourite Swiss imports?

A leading London importer of Swiss stationery products is planning to considerably widen its range into new areas – and satisfy what they see as a growing need by Swiss people in the UK to buy the kind of products they were used to at home.

Ken Irons, Chairman of Bureau Direct, said: "At present we order weekly from Switzerland. We would love to extend this service and offer Swiss residents here the chance to buy direct."

It was 15 years ago when Ken, a visiting lecturer at the University of St Gallen, became aware of the superior quality of many Swiss stationery goods compared to what was available in the UK. With his wife, Kathy, who used to accompany him on his many visits to Switzerland, he decided to set up a retail business. This, with the help of his son Dominic and daughter Jo, has since developed into a thriving mail order service on the Internet.

Now he would like readers of the *Swiss Review* tell him what products they have seen in the shops in Switzerland they would like to find in the UK.

"I would be open to all ideas

from your readers," he said. "Every suggestion will be followed up, and if viable we will consider importing it. In fact the only area we don't want to look at, initially, is foodstuffs.

"We already have a number of loyal Swiss customers, but until now we have been hampered by difficulties in shipping, either infrequently or in small quantities.

"Now we want to find out what others would be interested in and see what we can do about it."

• **Any ideas what YOU would like to see imported to the UK? Write to Ken Irons at Bureau Direct, Studio 20, The Arches, Hartland Road, London NW1 8HR.**

Golf at Silvermere

The next Swiss Golf Day, an 18 hole handicap stableford contest, will be on Monday, May 17.

It will again be held at Silvermere Golf Club, Cobham, Surrey, starting at 11am after a light breakfast.

Total cost, including an evening meal, is £50. Full details from Jeffrey Long on 01274 560 780.

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Giacometti's iconic 'Walking Man' strides into the history books

The art world, usually immune to astronomical sums, was stunned when Sotheby's sold a life-size bronze figure of a walking man by Ticinese sculptor Alberto Giacometti for a massive £65,001,250.

It was the highest price ever achieved for any work of art sold at auction anywhere in the world, and it confirmed Sotheby's, in London's New Bond Street, as the world's most successful auction house.

The 6ft tall sculpture easily broke the existing £58,520,830 auction record, set six years ago also at Sotheby's, but this time in their New York salesroom, for Pablo Picasso's 1906 portrait "Boy With a Pipe."

The sale itself started at £9 million and was all over in just eight minutes of furious bidding by ten collectors.

"L'homme Qui Marche" had long been considered the most important work ever created by the Swiss artist. Sotheby's called it "the pinnacle of Giacometti's experimentation with the human form" and said: "It is both a humble image of an ordinary man and a potent symbol of humanity."

It was cast in 1961 when Giacometti was 60 and was beginning to achieve international fame. He had been born in Borgonovo, Stampa, not far from the Swiss-Italian frontier, and studied at the School of Fine Arts in Geneva.

He died six years later in the Kantonsspital in Chur of heart disease and bronchitis and his body returned to Borgonovo for interment.



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Ambassador launches electronic newsletter

The Swiss Embassy has published its first electronic newsletter, which will be produced twice a year.

Ambassador Alexis Lautenberg says its aim is to "deepen our links with the Swiss community and keep you abreast of consular activities."

But he points out: "In no way is this supposed to 'tread on the toes' of the *Swiss Review*, which does a great job of connecting the Swiss abroad and which you will all continue to receive."

The first issue contains details of the new-style Swiss biometric passport, costing CHF 140.-, which requires applicants to travel to London to have their photograph taken and give their fingerprints.

Current passports remain valid until their expiry date.

The newsletter also gives preliminary details about this year's National Day celebration in London. The Ambassador held a meeting to set up a committee to organise the event, and Margrit Lyster and Daniel Pedroletti were appointed co-chairpersons.

It will be held at University College London on July 17.

Dr. Louis Guenin

B.D.S., L.D.S., R.C.S. (Eng.)

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Sad loss for Swiss in Scotland

Two Scottish Swiss clubs have been mourning the loss of one of their most popular members, Miggi Meier, who has died at the age of 68. She belonged to both the Edinburgh and Inverness clubs.

Ursula Ross writes:

Miggi, who was born in the Luzerner Hinterland, was a larger than life character, a totally self-made woman and a true entrepreneur.

Already an acclaimed chef and restaurateur, she opened the Alphorn Restaurant in Edinburgh on Swiss National Day 1980. With her friend and partner Jenny Graham

she ran the restaurant successfully for nine years, and then decided to move to the north of Scotland.

Always a country girl at heart she fell in love with the Scottish Highlands and bought a cottage near Loch Laggen, and later bought a derelict farm and converted it into holiday cottages.

Friends and customers loved the dynamic and generous hostess, who entertained them on her accordeon, singing and playing her alphorn.

She was an avid collector of edible fungi and would rise at dawn during the season to find the best

in the area. Her chanterelles were much sought after by restaurateurs as far down as Edinburgh.

It was only a few months ago that Miggi and Jenny decided to retire and move to a beautiful new house in Newtonmore. Miggi embraced village life with gusto.

Last summer she cycled 40 km in a Bikeathon, raising money for leukaemia. She was also a keen golfer, winning a number of competitions, and was a competent shot, hunting deer and rabbits.

She has left a huge gap in the life of all who knew her.



Miggi Meier: She made a success of everything she did during her life



Keen members of two Scottish Swiss clubs: Martha Hodge and Friedgard Adams

Martha and Friedgard, still very active at 90

Two of the oldest Swiss in Scotland have reached their 90th birthdays within a few months of each other.

Martha Hodge, of the Edinburgh Swiss club, left her home in Rubigen near Berne when she was 18 with the intention of learning English. She moved to the Scottish Borders to work as a mother's help, but when war broke out a year later she was unable to return home. A very resilient lady, she learnt to drive at the age of 53 and took up swimming and painting when she was 70.

Friedgard Adams, of the Fife Swiss club, came to Britain in 1954, first to England and later moving to Dunfermline. In her mid Eighties she fulfilled her youthful ambition to fly a glider, and until recently would drive on her own to the Continent. She acts as welfare visitor for her club, visiting elderly members by bus, and each year delivers a Weihnachts parcel of Swiss style sweets.

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