

## Very British, indeed?

Some weeks ago, Swiss Federal Councillor Christoph Blocher spoke about Winston Churchill's famous speech in Zürich from 1946, and he attempted to confer himself the halo of the British hero Churchill. Now and again, Switzerland takes its cue from Great Britain. Indeed, there are long-standing and far-reaching connections between the two countries. At the Anglo-Swiss Club in Lucerne, author Stefan Howald presented some findings from his research into this special relationship.

Illustrated by historical and recent pictures, he visited some topical locations, connected with anecdotes and stories. The Swiss cottage, for instance, was a fad in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In Bedfordshire there is still one in a Swiss garden, Queen Victoria erected one on the Isle of Wight as well as Charles Dickens in Rochester, and Swiss cottage tube station in London exists to this day.

On the other hand, there was Sherlock Holmes at the Reichenbach Falls, William Turner at the Devil's bridge and Miss Jemima's Swiss journal of the first conducted tour of Switzerland. Or, more unfamiliar, Ticinesi pastry-makers who invented fast food in London, Swiss mercenaries adopting guerrilla tactics for the British army during the American wars, and Swiss bankers who helped building Belgrave Square in London. These were some of the topics which were deepened in a lively discussion after the talk.

Stefan Howald: *Insular denken. Grossbritannien und die Schweiz. Facetten einer Beziehung.* NZZ Buchverlag, Zürich 2004, 268 Seiten, 48 Franken.