

Human ashes litter Swiss countryside

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A game full of surprises!

ing with six players and two sets of cards. The two teams of three excellent players each quickly adapted to the new form, and we had a great afternoon. Two players had to leave early, around 4pm, and the remaining four players then had a more traditional game, which was fun, too.

Future Events:

7th April, Easter Saturday, 2pm: Easter Egg Dyeing at the clubhouse

Bring the eggs, the rest is provided. We'll dye Easter eggs the traditional way, with herbs and natural dyes. You don't have to be a child or have children to enjoy Easter egg dyeing!



21st April, Saturday, 7pm: AGM at the Clubhouse

We promise you will not be elected into the committee against your will, but we'd love to see you there and take an active interest in the club. Please support the club; it is **your** club! You should have received an invitation by the time you can read this. *tb*

Human ashes litter Swiss countryside

Not everybody wants to be buried in a cemetery. In Switzerland, you can have your ashes scattered to the wind, in a forest or over a glacier. The liberal practice has resulted in entrepreneurs hawking some rather unusual services to people in other countries. EU citizens can have their ashes buried or scattered in the Swiss countryside as there is no obligation to be buried in a cemetery.

A German funeral company has bought a 15,000m² plot of forest in the Bernese Oberland, where the ashes can either be buried among the roots of a tree or scattered across the ground.

According to an article in the *Berner Zeitung*, not everyone is pleased with the development of what some call "funeral tourism". But Switzerland relies heavily on tourism. The relatives come as tourists, of course. A year later

they come back to visit their deceased grandma and they stay for a week or two.

Resentment against open-air burials emerged in canton Valais a few years ago. Commercial open-air undertaking services have been banned there.

Open-air burials are nothing new in Switzerland. There have been "cemetery forests" since 1993.

Unlike typical Swiss cemetery plots, which are cleared after 25 years, a tree stays standing much longer. Open-air burials are not big business, but some people wish to return to nature after death. According to estimates, open-air funerals account for significantly less than ten per cent. 75 per cent of people are cremated. But what exactly happens to the ashes in Switzerland is unknown because the urn is handed to relatives.

Bearded vulture makes long excursion

A bearded vulture released into the wild in eastern Switzerland last year was seen in Normandy and Belgium, but has now returned home. Experts from Pro Bartgeier (the Foundation for Bearded Vultures) had worried that the male bird, named Sardona, would not find his way back to the Alps.

Sardona, who was bred in the Goldau zoo in central Switzerland, carries a transmitter, enabling his movements to be tracked. The foundation announced that it had released three more young birds and said they were doing well.

The bearded vulture - also known as the Lämmergeier - is one of Europe's largest birds, with a wingspan of up to 2.8 metres. It was once widespread, but became extinct in the Alps at the beginning of the 20th century.

Children don't prevent divorce

Rather than being the glue that prevents parents splitting up, children will at best just delay divorce, according to a Swiss study.

The number of divorces peak when the family's youngest child is aged between three and five. Parents are often too busy in the initial years, when the children are still dependent. When they start school, parents are suddenly relieved of a certain amount of pressure. Another key moment is when the eldest child turns 20 - a time when their life really starts and they often move out. Children are not the cause of divorce, nor do they prevent it. Religion, age and geography have a greater influence. According to the Federal Statistics Office, almost one in two Swiss marriages ends in divorce.

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