



HELVETIA

MAGAZINE OF THE SWISS SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND INC

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SOGLIO, val Bregaglia, Grigioni.

One of the Italian-speaking villages in Switzerland, one that arrived inside the Confederation, while Val Tellina, otherwise known as Veltlin, did not.

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COVER



SOGLIO, GRIGIONI

One of the more striking villages in Switzerland, where Italian is spoken, and where there are more Swiss flags per capita than anywhere else in the old country. One of our Swiss ambassadors to New Zealand used to tell a joke: 'If you call a Swiss-German a German, that's a misdemeanour. If you call a French-Swiss, French, that's a crime. But if you call an Italian-speaking Swiss, Italian, that is unconscionable!'

As the saying goes, 'when in Rome, do as the Romans'. Here, in Soglio, it's a place to marvel at while waiting for the Postauto to head down the road into Italy, to then take a train back into Switzerland. Beautiful buildings, mountains all around, and forests of sweet chestnut hidden in the shade of steeply sloping valley sides, the Maira river carving a deep channel, ending up eventually in Lago di Como.

I am reminded of a very different trip up the valley. An afternoon of golden light in a car with a friend, stuck behind a crippled old truck, spurting foul diesel fumes. We spotted a place where we could overtake on the narrow winding and forested road, not noticing the solid white line that looked freshly painted, only for white-gloved, black-clad carabinieri with guns to wave us down. I slowed immediately, turned left into a convenient parking bay, stopped and wound down my window. I received a barrage of extremely

rude manners, and a command to get out of the car, which, by the way, had Zurich plates. On Graeme's side, an officer tapped the window with the end of his pistol, and he got out. While attention was focused on Graeme, I hid all of our cash in the boot, and said a cheery 'Buongiorno' to a group of police, all pointing guns at us.

'Occhiali,' the man in charge shouted at me, gesturing at his eyes, and I shrugged my shoulders, and tried to explain in my poor Italian what I had done, and why. It may have been legal to overtake earlier; however, I have always been nervous of blind corners. Unsatisfied with my explanation, they shouted at Graeme, who said nonchalantly, 'non comprendo'. This enraged our reception committee even more, and the leader screamed at me to pay them a fine. I said I had no lire. 'Accipiamo franchi,' was the reply, more businesslike now. I said I had no Swiss francs. The ticket will be double the cost, they said. I said I was willing to pay that. So, after a long and elaborate show of hostility, the Italian coppers wrote out a ticket, and I can't remember the amount, something outrageous.

I asked Graeme to drive, and off we travelled, more slowly now, and I lowered the window, ripped up the ticket into shreds, and threw them out the window. We had a good laugh, and all these years later, I understand the emphasis on Swiss flags in Italian-speaking parts of Switzerland.

-Bernie

IN THIS ISSUE...

- 03 From the President
Editor's note
- 04 Swiss Society AGM
Pension news from the Embassy
- 05 Society has OSA candidate
News from the Swiss Embassy
- 06 Veltliner wine
- 07 Veltlin – it could have been Swiss!
- 08 Swiss wrestling in Taranaki
- 09 Olympic skiing in Milano-Cortina
- 10 The Swiss-Italian migration
- 11 Art: Alberto Giacometti
- 12 Nature: The linden tree
- 13 Swiss correspondent news:
The Swiss tax system
- 14 Kids' fun page
- 15 News: Wellington Swiss Club
Dunedin Group
Auckland Swiss Club
Hamilton Swiss Club
Taranaki Swiss Club
- 16
- 17
- 18
- 20 The best of Switzerland:
Mario Botta, Ticino architect

ADVERTISERS

- 02 Black Forest Gourmet Butchery
- 07 Fribesco
Arobake
- 09 Prospect Consulting
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- BP Transport & Diesel Services

From the President



Dear Fellow Swissies, Our voice was heard! The international arm of the Swiss broadcasting corporation is preserved. Democracy is alive. I am so proud of us all and want to thank each and everyone of you who made the effort to sign the petition and cast their vote which, I am sure, was weighty enough to influence the opinion of both houses of parliament, as well as the public, to see the importance

of objective and authentic reporting, to Swiss in Switzerland as well as abroad. With just a touch of guilt towards my people back home who are now finding no relief from their yearly broadcasting levy burdened upon them, I feel the least we can do here is to make use of this gift, follow the news in Switzerland, and participate wherever we can.

Participation is the key word in a functioning democracy: Inform ourselves. Form an opinion. Voice it. With our Swiss Society AGM coming up, we have the opportunity to practise democracy. Read the minutes, the sports rules, the constitution (which was decided on last year and is by now well embedded in the Office of Incorporated Societies), the reports at hand, and turn up to the meeting. Taranaki is our host this year, and beside the formalities this will be a memorable social event, I can assure you. Not to forget the need for bums on seats for the yearly Cowbell Competition!

We have a potential candidate to present to you for the council of the Swiss Abroad in Switzerland, please read her impressive introduction. Exciting news, and a good start to the year. Happy reading.

Trudi

Editor's note



Saluti a tutti. In Helvetia 11, we pay homage to a special part of Switzerland where Italian is the language, polenta, the staple food, and home to extraordinary natural beauty and architecture, and, of course, the people. Enjoy...

Bernie

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Swiss Society news | Nachrichten der Schweizer Gesellschaft



The Swiss Society of New Zealand
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

will be held on
**KING’S BIRTHDAY WEEKEND:
SUNDAY May 31, 2026, at 2pm**
Venue: Taranaki Swiss Club, 3 Grace Avenue, Kaponga

PROGRAMME

The Taranaki Swiss Club cordially invites all Swiss Society members to attend our functions and events, at our clubhouse. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible to enjoy catching up with friends, making new acquaintances while appreciating the camaraderie of fellow Kiwi-Swiss.

SATURDAY May 30

4pm: Our clubhouse will be open.
6pm: **Dinner** – \$20 per person. Cash bar available. Followed by a social evening.

SUNDAY May 31

10am: **Cowbell Competition.**
1pm: Lunch will be provided to all attendees.
2pm: **AGM of the Swiss Society of NZ Inc** (last year’s minutes found on the website: www.swiss.org.nz/links/)
6pm: **Catered dinner** – \$40 per person, followed by music and entertainment.

MONDAY June 1

We wish everyone safe travels home and look forward to seeing you again soon.

Everyone – for all meals, please RSVP by Wednesday May 20.

Club members – reserve with your club secretary and they will pass it along.

Society-only members – Contact Marianne Drummond, 06 762 8757, 027 762 8011 or email marianne.drummond@swiss.org.nz

AGENDA

1. Welcome / housekeeping – attendees list
2. Apologies
3. Address of our patron, the Ambassador of Switzerland, Viktor Vavricka
4. Appointment of scrutineers
5. Minutes of the AGM 2025 – matters arising.
Please ensure you have read the minutes beforehand – they can be found on the website: www.swiss.org.nz/links/
6. Minute of silence in remembrance of those who have passed
7. President’s report
8. Editor’s report
9. Treasurer’s report
10. Approval of accounts payable, including \$1000 for the Hamilton Club (host of 2025 AGM)
11. Webmaster’s report
12. Riflemaster’s report
13. Delegate for the Swiss Abroad report
14. Setting of Society subscription fees for 2027/2028 (currently \$30pa)
15. Election of officers
16. Election of delegate(s) to the OSA – nominations sought
17. Conflicts of interest
18. Clubs/regional groups reports
19. New members to approve
20. General business – Motions as follows:
 - ▶▶ to appoint a representative to the OSA Council
 - ▶▶ to approve small changes to the Society sports rules (these are on the website: www.swiss.org.nz/links/)
You will see the additions made, written in italics)
 - ▶▶ that \$1000, split into 3, will be used to support representatives from Nelson, Christchurch and Dunedin to attend the AGM
21. Setting date and venue for next AGM – Wellington, June 5/6, 2027
22. Closing

Swiss Society news | Nachrichten der Schweizer Gesellschaft

ORGANISATION OF THE SWISS ABROAD
We have a candidate! Meet Esther Gilbert



I was born in Bern, Switzerland, and emigrated with my family to Dunedin in 1986, where I completed my schooling and tertiary studies. After nearly a decade working in hospitality across Queenstown, Wellington and Auckland, I returned to Dunedin in 2006.
For almost 20 years my husband Kevin and I owned and operated a range of bakeries in Dunedin, giving me deep experience in small business management, governance, and team leadership. This entrepreneurial journey was enriched by active involvement in local governance and community organisations — from the Dunedin Rudolf Steiner School and the Dunedin Christmas Charitable Trust to advisory roles supporting the Otago Farmers’ Market and other initiatives. These roles have strengthened my competencies in strategic thinking, stakeholder engagement and collaborative leadership.
My Swiss heritage has been a constant influence in both my personal and professional life, and remains a guiding inspiration in my community engagement. Since 2021 I have served as co-ordinator for the Swiss community in Otago and Southland, bringing together

a diverse group of Swiss nationals and their families across the lower South Island. In this role I organise cultural celebrations, maintain community networks, and encourage connection with Switzerland, particularly among younger generations, including through events tied to the Swiss national day and larger occasions such as when the Swiss women’s national football team chose Dunedin as their base during the FIFA Women’s World Cup.
The Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA), the representative body of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad and often described as the ‘Parliament of the Fifth Switzerland’, advocates for Swiss citizens living abroad, strengthens their ties with Switzerland, and ensures their voices are heard by Swiss authorities on matters ranging from political rights and voting access to cultural engagement and consular services. As a candidate, I am committed to ensuring Swiss citizens in New Zealand and across Oceania are effectively represented within this forum – safeguarding democratic participation, strengthening communication between expatriates and Swiss institutions, and fostering cultural continuity for future generations.
I bring a balanced perspective to this role – firmly rooted in Swiss heritage, yet informed by lived experience in New Zealand. I am dedicated to serving the interests of Swiss living outside Switzerland with integrity, commitment and a focus on meaningful outcomes.

News from the Embassy | Nachrichten aus der Schweizerischen Botschaft

Pension news Swiss old-age, survivors and disability insurance (OASI/DI)
13th payment coming in December!

The 13th AHV pension will be paid out for the first time in December 2026. The Swiss Compensation Office will pay pensioners an additional monthly pension each year in December.
The 13th payment of the old-age pension corresponds to one-twelfth of the total annual amount of old-age pension paid out. Child’s pension or supplementary pension as well as the pension supplement for women of the transitional generation (AHV21) are not considered in the calculation.
Persons who are entitled to an old-age pension in the month of December are eligible for the 13th old-age pension (Art. 34ter para. 1 AHVG). Survivors’ pensions for widows, widowers, and orphans, as well as disability insurance pensions, will continue to be paid 12 times per year.

For further information, insured persons may contact the Swiss Compensation Office SCO in Geneva: www.zas.admin.ch/en -or- <https://ecdc.zas.admin.ch/services/contact-us/avs>
The Compensation Office that pays the old-age, survivors and disability insurance (OASI/DI) pension in December is responsible for calculating and paying the 13th OASI pension. A calculation for the exact amount paid out is not possible before December!
www.bsv.admin.ch/de/umsetzung-13-ahv-rente



News from the Embassy
Nachrichten aus der Schweizerischen Botschaft

The Embassy of Switzerland in New Zealand is pleased to inform you about a new staff member: Melanie Modespacher joined our team in February 2026 as a research associate in the diplomatic section and will be with the embassy for the next six months.
Originally from Basel and 25 years

old, Melanie holds a master’s degree in International Affairs and Governance from the University of St Gallen and has previously completed an internship at the Embassy of Switzerland in Slovenia.
Curious about global affairs and multilateral cooperation, she is ready to dive into South Pacific diplomacy.

Outside of work, Melanie is a passionate runner and enjoys all kinds of sports. She’s excited to make the most of New Zealand’s endless opportunities for outdoor adventure.

Welcome
Melanie!

The Embassy is on FACEBOOK @SwissEmbassyWellington



Valtellina, Lombardy – Italian wine region. Foto: wine-searcher.com

Veltliner vino

A well-travelled wine

If you chance to stay the night in an alpine hut in Switzerland, and if there's an honesty box to buy a bottle of red, it's likely what's on offer is a Veltliner, aka Valtellina. In alpine wandering tradition, the Veltliner 'travels well', and, supposedly, is better drinking than other wines, which, apparently, go off if taken into higher altitudes.

Well, is this actually true? The Helvetia team takes a deeper look...

The Tellina valley looks striking on a map, running from east to west, a scant 20 kilometres or less south of the canton of Grigioni, and flowing into the top of Lake Como. To think it could have been part of Switzerland (see Trudi Brühlmann's piece on a strange case of reverse colonisation). This part of Italy's Lombardy has been producing wine from the Nebbiolo aka Chiavennasca grape variety for more than 2000 years.

Most of the vineyards are at altitudes of 230-765 metres above sea level, in steeply sloping terrain (similar to Valais vineyards), following the Adda river, which has scored a deep track through hard granite. Grape harvesting is costly and time consuming because of the steep slopes, and, so, the grapes must be picked by hand – 1400 man hours per hectare, per year.

To ripen well, the vines are planted on sunny south-facing slopes, ideally facing west. The soils are gravelly, well-drained and rich in silica, dotted with bigger rocks, which gather heat throughout the day and release it in the evening. That helps prevent springtime



frosts, and evens out the otherwise large daily temperature swings.

The result is rosso di Valtellina, bright crimson when bottled, and carrying an aromatic bouquet of 'dried cherries, tar and rose water'. Despite this description, you'd call it a light red, and very drinkable.

Is Veltliner a well-travelled wine?

An online search explains that a wine that 'travels well' in the Alps is a wine that remains stable despite temperature swings and during transport (traditionally by mule, sled or on foot), and tastes good when slightly cool but not cellar-chilled, and when served with salty, hearty alpine food, for instance, älplermagroni or rösti.

Veltliner fits these characteristics very well, having naturally high acidity, so it stays lively and fresh at cool temperatures, and it has a medium body and alcohol levels for better enjoyment at altitude. There's also tradition and the wine's availability to consider.

To confuse matters slightly, there is also a wine called Grüner Veltliner, which is an Austrian grape variety, and a popular white wine in that country. This also has that bright acidity that is refreshing at altitude and goes well with rich alpine food.

Both types of Veltliner have been historically consumed throughout the central alps, including in Switzerland, and still today. But according to Chat GPT: in Swiss alpine huts, you're more likely to find Valais wines, such as Fendant and Dôle, as well as regional Swiss whites and reds.

-Bernie

Veltlin – it could have been Swiss!



Take a map of Switzerland, and look at the southeast of Switzerland – you'll find the canton of Graubünden, otherwise known as Grischun or Grigioni. It is a canton of one 150 valleys; perhaps we will come back to the other 147 valleys another day. This Helvetia will only focus on three of them: Valle Mesolcina (Misox in German), Val Bregaglia (Bergell), and Val Poschiavo (Puschlav).

The three valleys are separated from each other by lots and lots of mountains – so what unites them to appear together in Helvetia 11? It is their common language: Italian, the third official language of Grigioni, the only Swiss canton to have three official languages. All three valleys face south. The Mesocco borders on the canton of Ticino; the other two Italian-speaking bits of Grigioni look towards Italy, the fertile, mild, wide Valtellina (Veltlin in German), famous for its wine, which belongs to Italy. It could have been Swiss; in fact, it was Swiss at one stage. And Switzerland could have got it back – if only...

To go back in history

The Veltlin has been populated, and cultivated since pre-Roman times. During the Middle Ages the Veltlin belonged to various bishops, and from 1335 onwards, it was part of the duchy of Milano – except for Poschiavo, which had joined the Gotteshausbund, one of the three local confederations or alliances that later morphed into the canton of Grigioni, as we know it today.

The three alliances of what is now the canton finally managed to conquer the whole of the Veltlin. Everything looked rosy, and the Veltlin didn't suffer too much under the local bailiffs. But when Milano became part of the Habsburg empire in 1535, the geopolitics of this region changed markedly. The Veltlin suddenly became the link between Milano and Tyrol, the Habsburg heartland.

The Reformation of the early 1500s complicated matters further: Habsburg was fervently Catholic, and so were the majority of people in the Veltlin. Graubünden, on the other hand, had become equally fervently Protestant. Many people on both sides lost their lives (and two years of bubonic plague killed one-quarter of the population, impartially claiming the lives of both Catholics and Protestants).

The Veltlin returned to Graubünden in 1639 until Napoleon Bonaparte arrived and reorganised Europe. That didn't last very long, however. In 1815, when Europe was again reorganised, a further opportunity appeared to add the Veltlin to Switzerland. The people of Veltlin would have liked to come back to Switzerland, as a second Italian-speaking canton, like the new canton of Ticino; however, some Swiss diplomats were scared to upset the balance of the various languages and the balance of religious beliefs. And, so, the Veltlin is not a Swiss canton, but a popular holiday destination for the Swiss, and the Veltlin wine has to be imported.

-Trudi B

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Swiss wrestling | Schwingen in Taranaki



To see Schwingen in action, it's hard to beat the Taranaki picnic held in early February every year in Kaponga. These wrestling bouts are fast and furious, and that's just the boys and girls who in many ways are the stars of the show for their fearlessness and mastery of this traditional Swiss sport.

For the grownups, it helps to be big, and this year's Schwingerkönig is no exception, superbly fit and strong, and the size of a small bank vault. But there's a lot more than brute strength to flipping an opponent on their back, I am told.

There are a few techniques, if you're considering giving it a go, or simply to understand what's going on in the sawdust. Balance, leverage, and timing are essential attributes, while gripping firmly onto opponents' canvas wrestling trousers. Among dozens of techniques, Kurz, Hüfter and Brienzer are three of the most famous and the 'how-to' for each is listed below.

Whichever the technique – in Kaponga, success seemed to depend mostly on the element of surprise – both shoulders must hit the ground for the bout to end. On leaving the ring, the winner brushes sawdust off their opponents' back in a display of respect.

The Kurz

The attacker pulls the opponent forward while keeping a tight grip, and at the same time, hooking or blocking one of the opponent's legs with their own leg. Using a strong twisting motion, the attacker throws the opponent sideways or backward onto their back.

The Hüfter

This is a hip throw adapted to Schwingen's trouser grip. The attacker turns their body sideways in front of the opponent, and uses their hip as a pivot under the opponent's center of gravity. With a strong pull on the trousers and a lift of the hip, the attacker flips the opponent.

The Brienzer

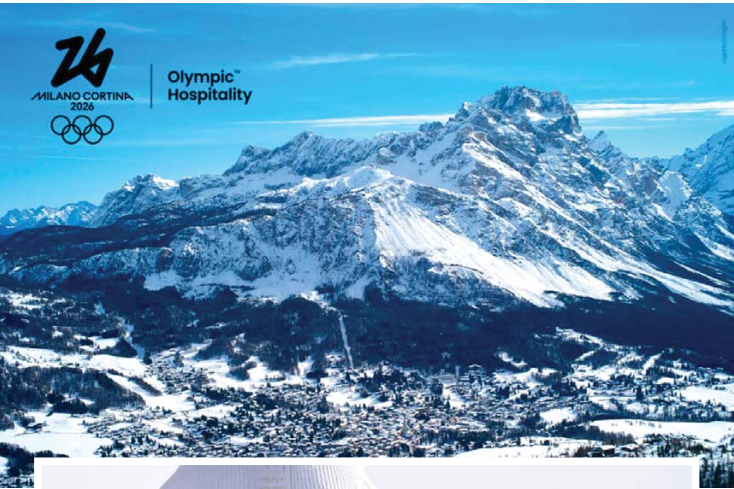
It looks like you could injure yourself quite badly if you get it wrong. In this one, the attacker hooks one leg deep inside the opponent's legs, and at the same time lifting and twisting the opponent while rotating their body, throwing them backwards or sideways.

RIGHT

Taranaki's Charlie Werder won the juniors and Shay Smith-Luond defended his title, winning the seniors' section.



Olympic skiing | Schweizer Olympische Skierfolge



A Swiss mega-champion in Milano-Cortina

History was made at the 25th Winter Olympic Games in Milano-Cortina d'Ambrezzo, Italy, when Franjo von Allmen (pictured here) won three gold medals in downhill skiing events. For anyone who missed his triumph, this is the first time this has happened since Jean-Claude Killy took the downhill, giant slalom and slalom ski titles in 1968 in Chamrousse, near Grenoble, France.

A new star in alpine skiing, Franjo von Allmen hit the world championship scene among the medal winners in 2024 in winning the super-G at Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. In 2025 he won gold in the same event in Wengen, Switzerland.

Born in 2001 in Boltigen in the Berner Oberland, von Allmen started skiing when he was two years old. Qualifying as a carpenter, von Allmen crowdfunded his tilt at the Olympics. His gold medals are in the downhill, super-G and combined team event (with Tanguy Nuf).

Cortina d'Ambrezzo is located around two hours' drive north of Venice in the Dolomites, and last hosted the Winter Olympics in 1956. Closer to Switzerland, the city of Milan hosted the non-skiing related events.

Switzerland ranked eighth on the medals table, with six gold, nine silver, and eight bronze. Notably, Mathilde Gremaud won a gold medal in women's freestyle skiing; the same for Loïc Meillard in men's slalom; and Marianne Fatton in women's sprint in ski mountaineering.

Other events in which Swiss won medals were in cross-country skiing, aerial skiing, ski jumping, curling, bobsleigh, and ice hockey. With these results, Swiss athletes remain firmly among the leading winter Olympic competitors.

The 2030 Winter Olympics are scheduled to be held in the southern French alps.



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Immigration | Einwanderung

From the alps to Aotearoa: The Swiss-Italian Bergell migration to Taranaki

In the shadow of the Swiss Alps and just a few kilometres from the Italian border lies Stampa, a tiny village of 50 houses in the Bergell Valley.

Today, it's known as the birthplace of the celebrated Giacometti artists, but in the early 1900s, it was the starting point of a remarkable migration story that would connect this remote Swiss valley to the Taranaki region.

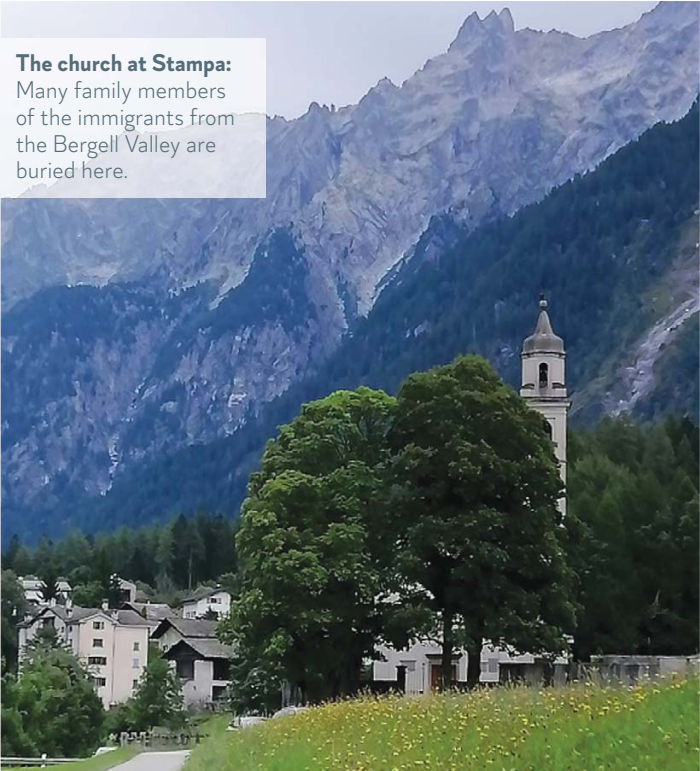
The story begins with two sisters from the Meuli family, Maria and Elsbeth, originating from Nufenen in the Rheinwald. In 1904 Maria went to work in Stampa where she met and married Otto Giacometti. Two years later Elsbeth married Ernesto Giacometti. As the Meulis had been settling in New Zealand since 1875, a vital bridge between the two distant lands was created.

This connection would soon offer hope to those seeking escape from the grinding poverty of the Bergell Valley, where steep mountain slopes and harsh conditions made life a constant struggle. A diet consisting mainly of bread, potatoes, maize polenta and cheese, with occasionally goat and pig meat (luganiche) and, in some villages such as Castasegna and Soglio, chesnuts, meant, however, there was no starvation.

In 1910 two brothers, Giovanni and Cristiano Stampa, became the first from the Bergell to make the journey to New Zealand. Another brother, Agostino Lorenzo, later joined them.

When Ernesto and Elsbeth Giacometti arrived in New Plymouth in 1912 with their small daughter Marieli, Elsbeth's recently widowed father, George, and Claudio Milesi who accompanied them, there were already ten members of the Meuli family in the area.

Shortly after, Agostino and Rodolfo Milesi arrived, as also did 16-year-old Mario Clalüna. Unable to find work in his home area, he too decided to leave. None of his four sisters had reached adulthood, an



The church at Stampa:
Many family members of the immigrants from the Bergell Valley are buried here.



indication of the hardship the people in the valley were experiencing. Along with Martelletti from just over the border in Italy, these families formed a close-knit Bergell immigrant community in Taranaki. It is thought these immigrants went by train to Chiavenna and from there to Genoa where they embarked for New Zealand.

Life in New Zealand proved promising. Within a month of arrival, Elsbeth Giacometti wrote home about their new daily routines—milking cows and raising calves in this unfamiliar land. After just one year, she proudly reported saving more money than they had in their entire lives in Stampa. By 1915, she and Ernesto were leasing their own 20-hectare farm in Okaiawa and running a herd of 30 cows.

Not every story had a happy ending, or a life lived out in New Zealand. Claudio Milesi succumbed to homesickness and took his own life shortly after arriving. The 1918 influenza claimed Giovanni Stampa's life in Hawera, and his brother, Agostino Lorenzo, went back home in 1923 where he lived as a farmer, mountain guide and hunter. Mario Clalüna returned to Switzerland in 1938 to find love, ultimately selling his New Zealand farm when his wife refused to emigrate.

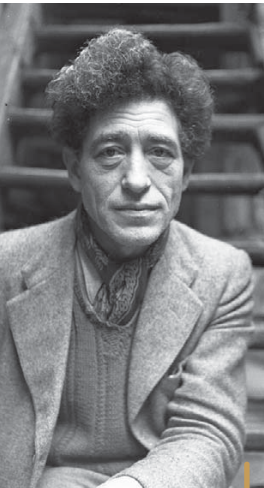
Yet many flourished. The Giacomettis lived out their lives in Okaiawa, with Elsbeth passing in 1957 and Ernesto in 1960. While their surname no longer exists in New Zealand – Maria Giacometti having married Gordon Malcolm – their descendants still work the same farm. The Stampa line continues through Christiano's three sons, and the Milesi legacy lives on through descendants of Julia Milesi Frank.

Today, this rich history is preserved at the research centre in Puke Ariki, in New Plymouth, where photographs, documents and letters, in German and Italian with their English translations, tell the story of these brave migrants. Their journey from a small Swiss valley to the farmlands of Taranaki stands as a testament to the power of hope and determination in forging a new life half a world away.

My thanks to Dr Marco Giacometti, Stampa, who entrusted me with the material on which this article is based, and to him and Paul Meuli (New Plymouth) for permission to lodge it in Puke Ariki, thus ensuring that these stories remain a living legacy. **-Joan Waldvogel**

Interested in reading about other Swiss who have settled in New Zealand? Stories of the Meuli family and other Swiss immigrants, can be found in Swiss Settler Stories. Email for info: forestbird@xtra.co.nz

Art | Kunst: Alberto, der berühmte Schweizer Bildhauer



Alberto Giacometti (1901 – 1966)
Sculptor, painter, draftsman and printmaker.
Widely considered one of the most important sculptors of the 20th century.
Foto: **Emmy Andriesse, wikipedia.**



Giacometti sculpting his wife, Annette.
Foto: **Annette Giacometti.**
Fondation Giacometti, Paris. wikipedia.



Femmes de Venise (Women of Venice) by Alberto Giacometti.
Exhibition organised by the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, in collaboration with the Fondation Giacometti, Paris. 2018-19.

Alberto Giacometti More than a sculptor

Alberto stands out as the only Giacometti mentioned in two books on modern art, for his eerie, skinny figures traced out in bronze. Once seen, not forgotten. 'Why should a human being seem more real in the distance than in close-up?' says Art of the 20th Century (Taschen, 2012). 'As soon as Giacometti realised that he was schematising the problem of distance, he found a distinctive artistic style for his standing figures of life-embracing women and wiry, striding men.' This book also says of Alberto that he produced 'some of the most stunningly vital sculptures' of the last century.

Until 1948 none of his sculptures stood taller than seven centimetres, which reflected his actual distance between him working and his model.

Labelled a surrealist in Modern Art (Scala, 2011), Giacometti was more a follower of the French writer Jean-Paul Sartre who believed that each human is responsible for creating their own meaning to life. In Alberto's words, 'I began drawing or painting, in order to denounce reality, in order to defend myself, to become stronger, in order to protect myself from hunger, cold and death, in order to be free.'

In his view, people see each other as apparitions surrounded by space. 'Life-size does not exist', he said, and he followed through by reducing his figures to matchstick dimensions, making them almost disappear. A friend of Alberto's once said that if he decided to sculpt you, 'he would make your head look like the blade of a knife'.

Born in Stampa to Annetta and Giovanni Giacometti, a well-known post-impressionist painter and a descendant of Protestant refugees to Switzerland from

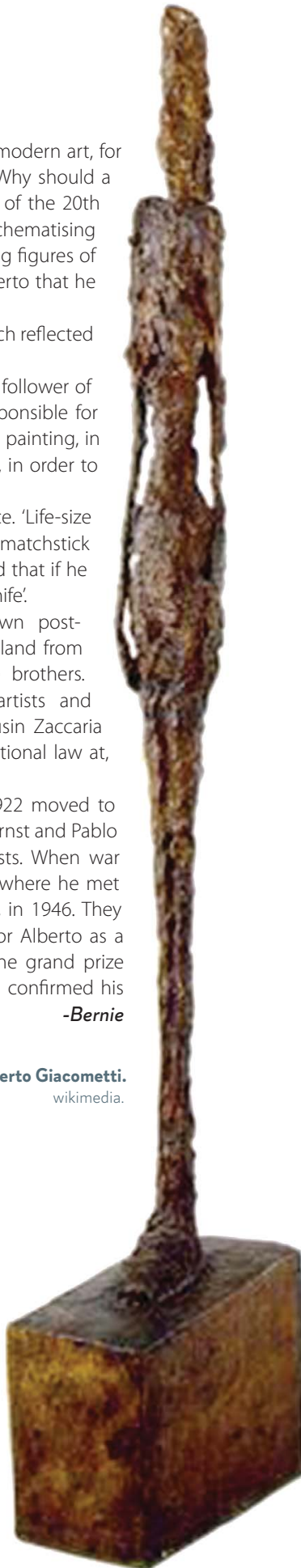
the Inquisition, Alberto was one of three brothers. Diego and Bruno became well-known artists and architects in their own right, and their cousin Zaccaria Giacometti was later a professor of constitutional law at, and chancellor of the University of Zurich.

Alberto studied first in Geneva, and in 1922 moved to Paris, France, where he met Joan Miró, Max Ernst and Pablo Picasso, among world-leading modern artists. When war broke out Alberto returned to Switzerland, where he met Annette Arm, a secretary for the Red Cross, in 1946. They married in 1949, and she sat many times for Alberto as a model. In 1962 Giacometti was awarded the grand prize for sculpture at the Venezia Biennale, which confirmed his worldwide fame.

-Bernie



Surrealist Table by Alberto Giacometti, 1933.
Georges Pompidou Center, Paris, France. wikipedia.



Tall Figure by Alberto Giacometti.
wikipedia.

Nature | Natur: Die Linde

The linden tree



*Am Brunnen vor dem Tore, da steht ein Lindenbaum;
ich träumt' in seinem Schatten so manchen süßen
Traum; ich schnitt' in seine Rinde gar manches liebe
Wort; es zog in Freud' und Leide zu ihm mich immer
fort, zu ihm mich immer fort.*

(Lyrics by Willhelm Müller, 1794-1824, composed as part of the Lieder-series by Franz Schubert, 1797-1828)

*'By the well before the gate stands a linden tree
in whose shade I have dreamed many a sweet dream;
into its bark I carved many a sweet loving word;
in joy and sorrow I am forever drawn back to it.'*

Where people gather, there is a linden tree. If you want a happy home, plant a linden tree on your property. In front of the Parliamentary Library in Wellington stands an old linden tree (above). Growing as high as 10 metres, and with a lifespan measuring hundreds of years, the linden is woven into poems and songs. It stood originally in Central European forests, and has been singled out for cultivation and the service of humans for its sweet-scented flower as a bee haven, and for its soft wood in the most exquisite carvings in churches around Europe.

To Germanic and Slavic peoples, the linden was dedicated to the goddess of love and fertility, Freya/Frigge. In medieval times it stood as the centerpiece of court settings, dance venues and farmyards. Parks are shaded in the comforting canopy of linden trees. Their legend went so far that they were planted as hedges around royal gardens.

In many aspects of society, the linden tree stands as a symbol for love, peace, justice and truth. It serves as a suit in some card games. In the Celtic horoscope, the linden tree is for people born between March 11-20 and September 13-22, the week leading up to the equinox in each case, and assigns the qualities of patience, gentle guidance and steady ambition and creativity to their personalities.

There are three main species of linden: Sommerlinde (Tilia platyphyllos Scop.) and Winterlinde (Tilia cordata Mill.). A cross between the two is the Dutch linden (Tilia europaea L.). Their use is quite similar, and I cannot say which of these I encounter most here in New Zealand. I just discover more and more areas of New Zealand that feature the linden: the town square in Palmerston North, streets around Auckland.



In Bavaria the linden was declared the healing plant of the year in 2025, hailed for its benefits for people suffering from 'cough, fever, nervous stomach and problems falling asleep'. The healing constituents are flavonoids including quercetin, tannins, mucilage and aetheric oils, which help alleviate inflammation, and have a soothing effect, particularly for breathing. In the same region, Tilman Riemenschneider's altar carvings in Creglingen, Wuerzburg and Muennerstadt are registered as UNESCO cultural heritage.

The flower including the bract is picked in the full sunshine, and dried in a cool dark place. A tea made from these, about five flowers per cup, with a little honey and lemon added, can be taken two to four times a day to alleviate a cold and fever. Its healing effect is not drastic but gentle, slowly but thoroughly. In my youth, whenever I came home feeling fluey and shivery, I would make myself a flask of lindenflower tea with a squirt of lemon juice and a dollop of honey, drink it then crawl into the hollow of the big heated stone oven and sweat it out. And that would be it for my 'flu. Enjoy.

-Trudi F

From our Swiss correspondent | Korrespondent in der Schweiz



The Swiss tax system

Taxation is not a Swiss invention and was already known in the Middle Ages. At that time, taxes were mainly payments to feudal lords such as bailiffs and to the church. The population paid customs duties, tithes and other levies, which were often paid in kind, such as grain or livestock. These levies were used to finance wars, maintain castles and provide for the clergy. With the formation of the Swiss Confederation in the 13th century, the cantons developed their own tax systems, often based on poll taxes or levies on property and income. The first attempts at income tax emerged, but the systems were inconsistent and often unfair.

The founding of the Swiss Confederation in 1848 marked an important milestone. The new Federal Constitution redefined the powers of the Confederation and the cantons. The cantons largely retained their tax sovereignty. Due to the pronounced federalism in Switzerland, there were 27 different tax laws, including those of the Confederation. During the First World War, the federal government introduced a war tax in 1915 to cover the high costs. This lapsed after the end of the war. With the Second World War, a military tax entered into force in 1940, which is considered the precursor to today's direct federal tax. After the war's end, the military tax was extended several times, and renamed 'direct federal tax' in 1982.

In the following decades, the tax system was continuously developed. Important milestones were:

- 1959: Introduction of withholding tax to combat tax evasion
- 1993: Entry into force of the Tax Harmonisation Act to standardise the cantonal tax systems. In accordance with the constitutional mandate, this contains provisions on tax liability, the subject matter and timing of taxes, procedural law and criminal tax law, which are binding on the cantons and municipalities. Under Article 129 of the Federal Constitution, the cantons remain responsible for setting tax rates and tax allowances
- 1995: Introduction of value-added tax (VAT) to replace sales tax.
- 1997: Change from biennial to annual assessment.

What taxes are now levied? | The federal government levies only a few taxes, including: direct federal income tax (VAT and withholding tax as well as direct deduction from capital interest, refundable if interest income is correctly declared).

Direct cantonal taxes: income tax and wealth tax (natural persons), profit tax and capital tax (legal entities), inheritance tax and gift tax, property tax (in some cantons), a transfer tax, and motor vehicle tax.

Interestingly, the cantons levy a capital gains tax (on the difference between the investment in property and the sale price). Its purpose is to reduce property speculation. In some cantons, the revenue is used for environmental measures.

Municipalities also levy taxes, usually as a percentage of the cantonal tax. Each municipality and canton determines the amount of tax independently. However, an intercantonal financial equalisation system ensures that poorer cantons do not have to raise their taxes excessively. Such financial equalisation also exists within the cantons among the municipalities. (Refer to the article in the previous Helvetia titled, 'The canton of Zug is awash with money').

Tax form for individuals | The tax form consists of several pages. In addition to personal data, it asks whether the individual is self-employed, employed or not gainfully employed. In addition to wages from any gainful employment, income from insurance, pensions,

securities, credit balances, business interests, as well as income from inheritances and real estate must be declared. If you own a house or flat, a notional rental value is counted as income.

You can deduct some of the costs of commuting (car, public transport), further training, meals during the working day (canteen, restaurant), healthcare, donations to charitable organisations and political parties, and childcare expenses. Property owners can deduct maintenance costs and debts (mortgages).

All assets must also be declared for tax purposes. These include equity investments in companies, savings, securities, precious metals, life and pension insurance policies, as well as real estate, vehicles, boats, etc. Currently, married couples (and registered partnerships) are still taxed jointly. These developments have led to an increasingly complex tax system. Nevertheless, they also offer advantages...

Tax fairness: Progressive tax rates take economic performance into account. A regressive system introduced by the canton of Obwalden was declared unconstitutional in 2007.

Deductions: Various deductions such as professional expenses, insurance premiums and pension contributions allow for a reduction in the tax burden.

Transparency: The Tax Harmonisation Act has made the cantonal systems more comparable.

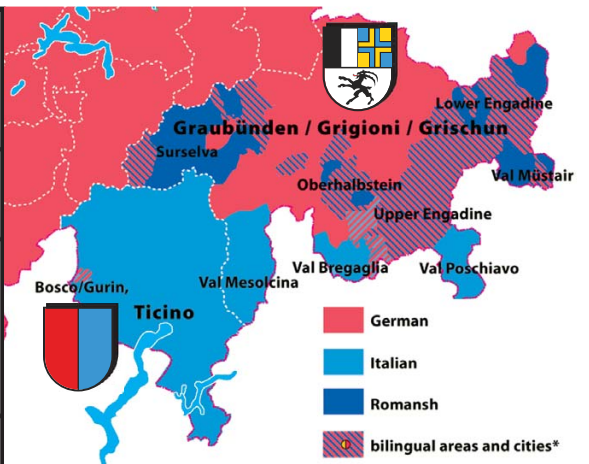
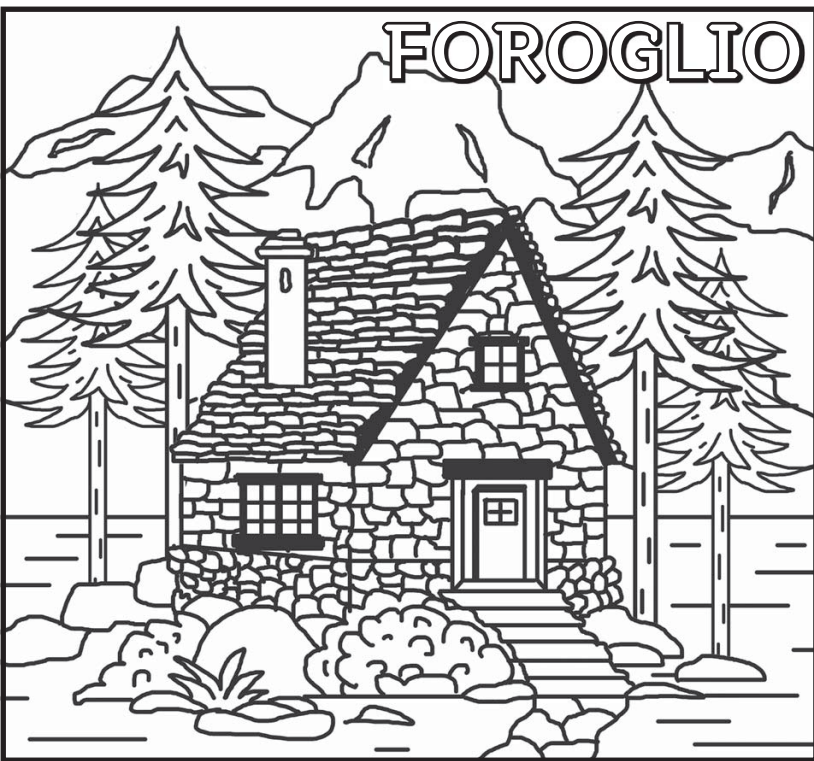
Conclusion | The Swiss tax system faces new challenges. Digitalisation and tax reforms. Electronic tax returns and digital processes simplify processing. Also discussions about tax relief and adaptation to international standards. For private individuals, this means that they must keep themselves informed about changes in order to fulfil their tax obligations correctly, and take advantage of any benefits. Switzerland's tax history is characterised by constant change and adaptation to social and economic developments. For private individuals, the tax system has evolved from simple levies to a complex system with many possibilities. A good knowledge of tax regulations and careful planning are more important than ever!

STOP PRESS | On March 8 Swiss voters decided that in future, each person will have to complete their own tax return. This is a change from the previous system of one tax return per married couple/family. The aim is to abolish the so-called (Heiratsstrafe) (marriage penalty). Due to progressive taxation, married couples are generally taxed more heavily than cohabiting couples who each file their own tax returns. However, the new rule contains further injustices. For couples with only one income, half of the child allowance may be lost.

There's more! If the Mitte Partei does not withdraw its previously launched initiative, 'Yes to fair federal taxes for married couples too', there will be another vote on changing the tax system in about six months. The Mitte wants to enshrine in the constitution that married couples may continue to combine their incomes in their tax returns and still not be disadvantaged in terms of taxation compared to unmarried couples. The initiative leaves open for the time being how this goal is to be achieved. If this initiative is also accepted, the question arises: which of the two tax initiatives should now apply?

One more thing: the tax reforms described above only apply to federal taxes. The cantons now have to amend their own rules. Tension over taxes remains, because the new rules will take up to six years to roll out.

-Martin Tochtermann



Swiss Italian (Italiano Svizzero) is mainly spoken in the beautiful southern canton of Ticino and in the southern part of Graubünden.
Map: Marco Zanoli, wikipedia (edited).

There are many gorgeous places to visit, like the stone cottages in Foroglio, the Lakes of Lugano and Maggiore, and cities like Bellinzona (the capital of Ticino), Ascona and Locarno, to name just a few!

Italiano Svizzero find the words...

While Italian-Swiss does have differences from everyday Italian, a few words can come in handy...

- Hello **Ciao**
- Good morning **Buongiorno**
- Goodbye **Arrivederci**
- See you later **Ci vediamo**
- Please **Per favore**
- Thanks **Grazie**
- You're welcome **Prego**
- Excuse me **Mi scusi**

See if you can find all these words in the word find, plus these famous Ticino destinations:

- Lugano
- Locarno
- Ascona
- Bellinzona
- Morcote
- Foroglio
- Lake Maggiore

This is hard... but the Italian & English words intersect or are next to each other.

E	M	A	G	G	I	O	R	E	L	O	N	I	C	I	T
K	U	B	O	B	T	F	E	S	A	H	E	L	L	O	A
A	S	U	I	C	H	J	G	K	K	Z	B	R	O	A	N
L	G	O	O	D	M	O	R	N	I	N	G	J	S	I	U
L	I	N	M	T	H	Y	A	A	M	B	O	C	K	C	A
A	T	G	O	A	N	O	Z	H	I	L	O	L	E	B	N
S	E	I	R	M	I	A	I	T	R	N	D	I	A	N	O
H	S	O	C	U	R	D	E	S	A	X	B	W	E	E	Z
S	A	R	O	S	C	L	E	C	O	U	Y	V	X	D	N
F	E	N	T	A	R	R	I	V	E	D	E	R	C	I	I
O	L	O	E	T	E	I	U	Q	I	B	W	A	U	S	L
R	P	E	R	F	A	V	O	R	E	C	R	E	S	U	L
O	R	E	T	A	L	U	O	Y	E	E	S	X	E	C	E
G	E	G	R	A	U	B	U	N	D	E	N	S	M	S	B
L	G	Y	O	U	R	E	W	E	L	C	O	M	E	I	E
I	O	B	S	L	R	N	Q	I	T	A	L	Y	C	M	W
O	N	A	G	U	L	O	C	A	R	N	O	O	M	O	C

See if you can find the four bonus words: **Ticino, Graubünden, Italy, Como**

Club News | Clubnachrichten



Dominique Heller throws high.



Michelle Leamy aims for the bullseye.



WELLINGTON | Roland Schütz takes aim with a crossbow.

Coffee and Zopf at Arobake

In between showers and wind gusts, three of us enjoyed the sunny courtyard of Arobake on March 7, to share our news and what's happening in the Swiss community. That included Odile who is Society treasurer and helps WSC with the finances; and Patricia who joined us last year and helps the Society with the Helvetia mailout of the Helvetia.

Arobake is a lovely venue, and the Swiss owner is making an effort to keep a few true Swiss staples, such as Laugebrötli salami sandwiches, Nussgipfel, Crèmeschnitten and delicious tortes and tarts. It's worth a tasting, if you are in town next time – Saturday April 4, 2pm (during the Easter break). See their ad on p7.

-Trudi F

Annual general meeting

In other news, we were due (at the time of writing) to hold our special general meeting to vote in our new WSC constitution, in light of changes to the Incorporated Societies Act, on Sunday March 22. Thanks to the hard work of Trudi Fill, Paul Scherrer, and Rob MacDonald to make this happen.

WSC AGM: A reminder that the annual formal meeting to hear the president's report, look at the club finances, and to elect a new club committee will take place on Sunday April 12, at 1pm.

Joining the committee is an excellent way to get to know club members, and to take the inside running in our club events. After the AGM, the committee's first task is to chart the club programme for the coming year.

Wellington Swiss Club

PAST EVENTS

Swiss sports day

Our annual sports day at the clubhouse in Wainuiomata took place on a warm summer's day, fortunate, because our weather in recent months has been hit and miss. The Leamy family pretty much took out the competition:

Steinstossen (shotput), men: Tim Leamy (28.91m), Bernie Napp (24.6m), Dominique Heller (20.88m). Women: Natalie Leamy (21.47m), Maria Scherrer (19.88m), Trudi Fill (19.29m).

Kegeln (9-pin bowling) open: Natalie Leamy (43), Tim Leamy, Michelle Leamy and Dominique Heller (all on 40), Bernie Napp (37).

Shooting (.22 calibre, 50 metres) was held at Paul Scherrer's farm in Mangaroa valley the previous day: Men: Paul Scherrer (56), Peter Keller (54), Roland Schütz (49). Women: Natalie Leamy (54), Michelle Leamy (37).

Well done to all contestants. Besides food, playing our national sports is a great way to connect with our Swiss heritage.

-Bernie

South Island Swiss news | Schweizer Gruppen auf der Südinsel



Dunedin

Sunday March 1 began with overnight heavy rain that didn't bode well for our annual picnic! The weather gods decided to smile on us though and we ended up with a dry (and sometimes even sunny) day which meant we were able to be outside while grilling our Cervelats and Bratwurst.

It was great to have close to 40 people join in the day's fun. We had the largest under-12 contingent we've had in a long while – it was nice to see the next generation coming through.

The venue we used had been a bowling club in a former life, so the large flat grassy area was perfect for a game of football. The hall had a fireplace which made it nice and cosy warm on an otherwise chilly day.

The sausages were joined by a couple of salads, bread rolls and – highlight! – Züpfe/Zopf. Dessert was chocolate cake, apple tart and Gugelhopf – a huge thanks to Kevin Gilbert for all the food preparations.

-Esther Gilbert

Club News | Clubnachrichten

Auckland Swiss Club

WELCOME
The Auckland Swiss Club warmly welcomes the following members:
• Martin and Helen Meyer
• Rosmarie Krieg.

PAST EVENTS
New Constitution Adopted

On February 22, the Auckland Swiss Club held a Special General Meeting to vote on the adoption of our new constitution under the Incorporated Societies Act 2022. Twenty-four members were present, ensuring a quorum, and I am very pleased to report that the constitution was accepted unanimously. The meeting itself was concise and efficient, reflecting the clear mandate from members and the careful preparation that has gone into this important milestone for our club.

This has been a two-year process, with considerable time, care, and discussion invested by the committee to ensure that the new constitution is fully compliant with current legislation while also honouring the traditions, structure, and future direction of the ASC. Thank you to all members who engaged with the process and to those who attended to support this important step.

We now look forward to our Annual General Meeting on May 17. This will be extra special as we celebrate the club's 70th birthday. Please keep this date free in your calendar. It promises to be both a formal and festive occasion as we honour our history and look ahead to the future together.

Society Games and Shooting Day

Following the SGM, around 60 members and friends gathered for a fantastic day of shooting, Society games, food, and good company. Shooting proved so popular that it ran throughout the entire day. It was wonderful to see so many members and families making use of our 50m range, with participants of all

ages trying their hand. A big thank you to Thomas, our new riflemaster, for running the shooting and keeping everything organised and safe throughout the day. Due to the high demand, we were unable to run the club air rifle competition on the day. This will now take place at a later date, to be announced, along with our Ezio Kegeln Cup competition.

Kegeln was also very popular, with many members keen to give it a go. The traditional Swiss Kegeln setup certainly kept everyone on their toes and had a way of humbling even the most confident players.

Despite the busy shooting schedule, we successfully ran all the Society games, and there was plenty of friendly competition and laughter throughout the afternoon. There were some very solid throws in Steinstossen, with Claudia and Caleb showing impressive form and giving the rest of us something to aim for, all in good fun of course.

Lunch was delicious and very well received. We had ordered extra, yet every single sausage was either enjoyed on the day or sold as takeaway packs afterwards. Our new Schweinsbratwurst were very well received, and the cheese Kranskys proved especially popular with our younger members. A special thank you to Betscharts for supplying the sausages and for the generous extra Cervelat packs we were able to offer. And thank you to all who helped to make this a successful event.

It was lovely to see a mix of long-standing members and new faces, and the Stimmung was fantastic as always. To top it off, the weather was kind to us, making it a perfect day at the Swiss Farm.

Shooting results:

Men-	1st: Caleb Rosamond	69
	2nd: Thomas Pfenniger	65
	3rd: Tony Vitali	61
Women-	1st: Gianna Pfenniger	74
	2nd: Helena Moors	64
	3rd: Addison Hochuli	51
Boys-	1st: Axel Pfenniger	21
Girls-	1st: Mia Pfenniger	41

Kegeln results:

Adults-	1st: Thomas Pfenniger	44
	2nd: Markus Bühler	43
	3rd: Caleb Rosamond	38
Juniors-	1st: Saskia Moors	33
	2nd: Axel Pfenniger, Felix Moors	15



Shotput results:

Men-	1st: Caleb Rosamond	23.42
	2nd: Thomas Pfenniger	18.52
	3rd: Lukas Ziegler	16.34
Women-	1st: Claudia Bühler	19.08
	2nd: Jackie Ziegler	16.38
	3rd: Helena Moors	15.03
Boys-	1st: Axel Pfenniger	16.01
	2nd: Felix Moors	11.46
Girls-	1st: Saskia Moors	17.86
	2nd: Mia Pfenniger	12.44

Jassen
Join our dedicated Jass community for a game. These are always on the first Friday of the month at the Danish House, 6 Rockridge Avenue, Penrose, from 7.30pm. For further details contact Adrian, 021 232 7998.

Feb 6:

1st:	Stephan Schneter	4093
2nd:	Fidel Good	3955
3rd:	Enid Bryner	3893
4th:	Berta Good	3886
5th:	Kurt Binder	3830

TRAPPING – we are always looking for helpers to join our trapping team to keep our land predator-free. A great opportunity for families with (older) children to teach about our native wildlife and how we can help protect these species.

WORKING BEES – We always need more helpers at the working bees! We don't expect you to come to every working bee, but we would really appreciate it if you could make it to one of them. Our club relies on volunteers to maintain and look after our beautiful Swiss Farm!
-Jackie

UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL 11/12: Shooting. Details sent to members.	MAY 1: Jassen at the Danish House, 7.30pm. 10: Working bee. 17: Our Club's 70th birthday and AGM (Sunday). We are celebrating the Club's birthday and holding our AGM, followed by a complimentary lunch.	JUNE 5: Jassen at the Danish House, 7.30pm. 13: Fondue night (Saturday) at the Danish House. Phone a committee member to find out more. Note: This is an RSVP event.	AUGUST 1: Swiss National Day (Saturday) at the Swiss Farm. We'll be celebrating with a bonfire and delicious grilled barbecue.
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Club News | Clubnachrichten

Hamilton Swiss Club

PAST EVENTS
Shooting

50-metre shooting was held on Saturday February 14. On this rainy day we met again at Bruno and Manuela's place for the event. The numbers this year were down due to the bad weather. We were lucky to be under the roof. After the shooting we met for sausages and homemade buns at Bruno and Manuela's house. Many thanks to the Epp family for hosting us and Hans and Walter for the professional support to make the day a success. Hope to see you and a few more next year hopefully - on a sunny day. -George

Results:

Juniors-	1st: Loui Epp	70
	2nd: Steven Ede	67
	3rd: Ben Epp	63
Women-	1st: Annabel Schweizer	64
	2nd: Taylor Ede	59
	3rd: Sonja Ede	54
	4th: Manuela Epp	34
Men-	1st: Bruno Epp	73
	2nd: Matthias Hurschler	69
	3rd: Hans Vetsch	67
	4th: Walter Zuber	65
	George Russenberger	65

UPCOMING EVENTS
Note: The next newsletter will be emailed or posted in July, prior to our 1st August function for which we will require bookings.

MAY
1: **Annual General Meeting** at Union Parish Hall, Cambridge commencing 7pm with drinks, followed by the meeting at 7.30pm. We would love to see lots of our members attend and support the hard-working committee. We would love to get another one or two new committee members or at least have a few extra volunteers at our big functions. We already know now that four from our committee will be away for our 1st of August function. Please keep that in mind if you can help out with catering or helping on the early evening function. A small plate would be appreciated for supper following the meeting.

HAMILTON COMMITTEE CONTACTS

For any further details or information about functions or membership, please contact:
Beatrice Leuenberger: M 021 29 28 254 P 07 843 7971 E: bea.leun@xtra.co.nz
Anita Zuber: M 027 498 5170 E: anita.zuber@swiss.org.nz
Herbert Staheli: M 021 962 708 @Hamilton Swiss Club

HAMILTON | Wet weather doesn't stop the picnic fun!



Annual Swiss picnic

The annual picnic was held on Sunday February 15 at Newstead School. This was the third wet year in a row. This time the forecast was meant to be okay, and it started off nice and fine, but no sooner had we set up, the rain started and didn't stop for several hours. In fact, we had just started packing up when we saw blue sky on the horizon.

Luckily it didn't put everyone off attending and no sooner were the freshly grilled sausages ready we had to shift everyone inside.

The poor cooks, Walter and Martin, got wet as well as the ladies who had to run back and forth to collect the sausages. Nonetheless, everyone enjoyed their lunch and lots of chatter inside the small hall which was quickly set up with tables and chairs and felt nice and cosy. Unfortunately, the bowling competition



Walter and Martin man the grill.

didn't get underway, even though everything had just been set up with two gazebos either end for a bit of cover from either sun or rain. Nor did the shotput competition – hopefully we will still get a good turnout for the cards.

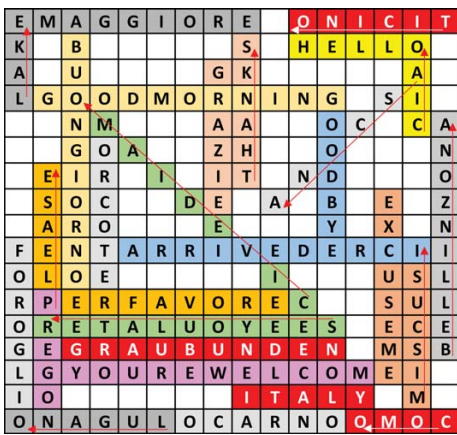
After lunch it was time for the huge selection of cakes to be put out, and it was time for coffee with or without Schnapps. This is always very popular and lots of people commented on the delicious selection.

Beatrice was also happy that she sold all the sausages she had ordered from the Swiss Deli – always such a big job but much appreciated by the members and great to have hired a chiller trailer for this weekend.

Thanks to all the committee and extra helpers on the day. Everything always seems to get set up and packed away quickly – thanks to lots of extra hands.

for the Hamilton Club so that we can compete in cards, shotput and bowling. If you would like to represent the club and attend the Society AGM, then please contact Herbert. The club will look at subsidising travel and meals. Please book your own accommodation, either in Kaponga or nearby Stratford or Hawera.

Kids' fun page answers
Kinderseite Antworten



Taranaki Swiss Club

PAST EVENTS

The fabulous Swiss picnic

February 8 we held our annual picnic on a beautiful, sunny day with a massive crowd of around 500 people attending. Firstly, we were so very pleasantly surprised to see a huge Swiss flag painted on the silage bales in our paddock – thanks Zeno Hess for your artistic flair – it really was an unexpected delight and added to the flavour of the day. A real wow factor!

We were privileged to have members from the Wellington, Hamilton and Auckland Swiss Clubs attending (together with office holders of the Swiss Society of NZ), as well as visitors from Australia, America

and Switzerland, and thank them very much for the extra effort they made to come to Taranaki.

A good contingent of members set up the gazebos with tables and chairs, barbecue, bar and hay bales around the sawdust ring so all was ready when people arrived. A huge thank you to the Kaponga Lions Club members who manned the barbecue. The queue of people waiting for sausages didn't seem to diminish; in all, about 800 cervelas and bratwurst were devoured. Many thanks to Stratford New World for donating the bread and serviettes; your continued support is greatly appreciated.

The bar was equally as popular with beverages and ice creams selling like hot cakes. Many thanks, Sophie, for making several emergency dashes to the Four Square for further supplies, and all those who helped Adrian at the bar. Our apologies for running out of

We remember | Todesanzeige

Johanna Dettling (née Riebli) 20.06.1958 – 14.09.2025 TARANAKI SWISS CLUB

Johanna (Hanni) was born in Cham, Switzerland to Joseph and Anna Riebli and was the youngest of four children. She was seven years old when her family made the hard decision to move to Taranaki, New Zealand.

They settled into a 50/50 farming job on Stent Road, Warea before moving to Otakeho and then finally settling in Midhirst. She found it hard when first starting school in New Zealand as she spoke very little English. The family were very social within their farming community and also a big part of the Taranaki Swiss Club which helped to stay connected with her home in Switzerland and also helped to shape her.

She met Tony in her teens and their friendship grew into a loving marriage. They had five children while farming on Palmer Road.

She first returned to Switzerland in her early 20s and made another two trips later in her life. She enjoyed visiting her siblings, reconnecting with other family members and friends.

She held many roles throughout her life and was a successful cook, seamstress, farmer, artist and a very loved wife, mother and grandmother.

From a small Swiss town to the wide fields of Aotearoa, Johanna's life was a journey in every sense – across oceans, across new places and through all the many paths that shaped her family. No matter where we were or what changes came their way, she carried a warmth that made every house feel like a home. She had a way of bringing people together, of filling a room with comfort, laughter and love. Because of her, their home was never just a place – it was wherever she was.

Johanna's family would like to thank all those that sent messages, flowers, brought home cooked meals and wrapped us in their love as they navigated their difficult journey. They also acknowledge and thank the Taranaki Swiss Club for all of their support.

Members of the Taranaki Swiss Club and the Swiss Society of New Zealand extend their sincere sympathy to Hanni's family and friends, both here in New Zealand and her country of birth, Switzerland.



We remember | Todesanzeige

Mary Dettling 18.05.1953 – 08.01.2026 TARANAKI SWISS CLUB

Mary was the second child of eight born to the late Thomas and Isobel Kowalewski. She grew up in Midhirst, in a very busy household. She attended St Joseph's primary followed by Stratford High School.

After leaving school, she worked at the loca dairy factory and then a fabric shop in Stratford. In 1970 Mary met Albert at the Swiss National Day celebrations in Kapuni, initially sitting with the Butler side of her family until Albert asked her to dance. With both families having Swiss heritage, involvement in the Swiss club activities continued throughout their life.

They were married in June 1973 and were blessed with seven boys – Brian, Patrick, Craig, Shaun, Gareth, Darren and Roger. They started married life taking on a 50/50 sharemilking job on York Road, where they went on to live for 41 years.

In 1989 Mary started her catering business, including the Stratford Club, Andre's l'Escargot and Pioneer Village Café and also included countless catering functions. During this time, they also purchased additional land to expand their York Road farm. In 2014 Albert and Mary moved to their Hunt Road property on the outskirts of Stratford, working hard to create their beautiful garden. Mary loved the house as it had direct views of Mount

Taranaki, and she enjoyed taking photos in all seasons and sharing them.

They enjoyed several overseas trips; going back to the family homes in Switzerland and Poland; trips with 'the Stratfords of the World'; and a number of cruises. Mary enjoyed making new friends and, above all, talking!

No challenge was too hard for Mary – when she got involved, she was all in – Toko Lions Club, Vintage Machinery Club, Taranaki Swiss Club, Stratfords of the World, Runners and Walkers Club, the local Daffodil Day luncheon and the local Catholic church. She also found time to write several books and family trees, including a book about her and Albert which she managed to finish a few months ago.

They participated in most Taranaki Swiss Club functions, especially appreciating Kegeln with son Roger and family, and enjoyed a few bus trips away to the other Swiss clubs. Our grateful thanks to them for donating much catering equipment to our club; it has been truly appreciated.

Members of the Taranaki Swiss Club and the Swiss Society extend their sincere sympathy to Albert and family on the loss of Mary.



some refreshments (mainly non-alcoholic drinks) and ice creams, but the crowd was far bigger than we had ever anticipated.

Children were kept busy with face painting, pony rides, bottle fishing, and our small playground, plus of course, the Schwingen. Helen, the face painter did a fabulous job painting soooo many faces, and Katrina was terrific giving the children untold pony rides. Both ladies commented on how well behaved all the children were, so thanks kids for being so nice and polite.

Unbelievably, 35 children participated in the wrestling and enjoyed their bouts, with this year's champion being Charlie Werder. Well done, Charlie. Second was Ben Epp from the Waikato and third, Atticus Tamatea.

In the senior wrestling, Shay Smith-Luond once again took out the title from Michael Appert and Richard Drummond. Congratulations Shay on defending your title; a great achievement.

Grateful thanks to our talented referee Thomas Werder; you do a great job, Thomas, and we really appreciate you doing it. Many thanks to Sonja Werder, Emma Kuriger and Daniel Drummond for all the admin work – much goes on behind the scenes to ensure the smooth running of this sporting event. Thanks Heidi for organising the prizes; not an easy task when there are so many competitors.

Thanks to Joe Kuriger, Joshua and Morgan for measuring the throws and collating the scores in the shot put; congratulations to Thomas Werder who got the top men's throw of 8.2m (with a brick) and his sister, Sonja, who threw 6.75m (using a shotput); muscles must run in the family. Well done to Tristen Kuriger who took out the junior shotput competition with a throw of 5.2m. Many thanks to everyone who participated; it's people taking part in activities such as this that make the picnic what it is.

Many thanks to Mark Kiser for organising the bottle fishing, and for donating all the prizes; we really appreciate your generosity, Mark. The tombola (Swiss raffle) tickets were then sold (many thanks to the keen ticket sellers!) and we thank the following sponsors very much for their fabulous generosity: Courtney Smith Builders, Central Taranaki Electrical (Mark Zehnder), Swiss Deli, Embassy of Switzerland, Ruedi Kull and Lisette Benkert. Thanks too, to Erna Zimmermann who rolled all the tickets; not a job for the faint-hearted.

During the afternoon we were entertained by music and alphorn playing which was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. Thanks so much for sharing your talents with us; we really appreciate your valuable time, and the music is just so very nice to listen to. Thanks to everyone who took photos and who have shared them with others; it's another great way of promoting our club.

Later in the day everything was put away again and many stayed to enjoy delicious spaghetti bolognese (now a tradition on the picnic night), lettuce and coleslaw (thanks to the wonderful ladies who made and prepared this lovely meal), and a wonderful, social time was thoroughly enjoyed. Huge thanks must go to everyone who helped to ensure the smooth running of the day, and even bigger thanks to all those who came along, for without you we wouldn't have such a tremendously successful picnic. It's certainly a great time to catch up with friends and make new acquaintances, all the while soaking up Swiss culture and traditions. See you at next year's picnic, but hopefully at one of our functions before then.

Kegeln has started again

We have had great attendance at the evenings, from children to adults; and it's great to see three generations of the Dettling family attend. We all enjoy friendly rivalry, a good natter, fun and laughter, and a lovely supper. Many thanks to Heidi for keeping us under

control, tallying up the scores and maintaining a good supply of lollypops; we appreciate what you do for us.

Annual general meeting

We held our 74th AGM on March 2 with a wonderful attendance of 32 members participating in the discussions. Othmar thanked all current committee members and helpers for their terrific work over the year, and we were thrilled to welcome five new committee members to our team – Robbie and Fiona Bishop, Leo Danz, Roger Dettling and Dani Meier. Many thanks for volunteering your time for our club, and we now have a huge team of 20 helping to organise functions, assist at working bees and just being there for you, our club members.

After the formalities were completed, a lovely supper was enjoyed, together with people mixing and mingling to create a lovely atmosphere. The committee looks forward to the year ahead, and we hope you will all enjoy the functions and events we organise for you.

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting appear on our website under Taranaki Swiss Club (part of the Swiss Society of NZ) and we would appreciate you reading these so that you know what is happening in our club. Should anyone wish to receive a paper version through the mail, please contact Marianne. Happy reading.

The calendar of events, newsletter and subscription notices will be sent out towards the end of March, so please take the time to read through them and attend as many functions and events as possible. We look forward to seeing you.

WELCOME

Following the picnic we welcome Antonia Stewart (née Hardegger) of New Plymouth as a member of our club and the Swiss Society. We hope you will enjoy our functions and the Helvetia magazine. We appreciated you bringing your mother to the picnic and hope she enjoyed the day.

UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL 2026

- 2: Kegeln** from 7.30pm. Join us, it's fun!
- 12: Society and Championship Shoots** from 11am. Juniors most welcome! Then **Jassen** at 1pm. Come, and join in!
- 16: Kegeln** from 7.30pm.
- 19: Jassen** at 1pm.

MAY

- 6: Seniors' Social Day.** Enjoy a chat and laughter, with lunch and entertainment!
- 7: Kegeln** from 7.30pm. Terrific fun!
- 17: Jassen** at 1pm. Give it a go!
- 21: Kegeln** from 7.30pm.
- 23: Fondue/Sausages and Salads** served from 6-8pm. Please ensure that you book!
- 24: Swiss Society sports competitions** from 11am. Participate in shooting, shotput, Kegeln and Jassen. Separate competition for under 16s. Bring your own lunch and drinks, and enjoy a super day. **Championship Shoot** will follow.
- 30/31: AGM of the Swiss Society and Cowbell Competition:** We will be hosting this year and need your muscle and card skills. This is always a great weekend with Kiwi-Swiss.

JUNE

- 7: Jassen** at 1pm in the clubhouse.

The best of Switzerland



The first construction of Mario Botta was this parish house in Genestrerio, half way between Mendrisio and Stabio, 1961–63.



Church of St John the Baptist in Mogno, high up in the Valle Maggia. Built between 1994–96, it replaced an old church that had been destroyed by an avalanche in 1986.



Chiesa di Santa Maria degli Angeli on Monte Tama. Built of porphyry, it stands on the edge of a slope opening onto an amazing panorama. Built between 1992–96.

Mario Botta – Architect from Ticino

A famous son of Ticino, whose work will survive us all, is Mario Botta, born in 1943 and still going strong. His start in life was what might be called a bit turbulent: At age 15, Botta dropped out of secondary school. But he knew what he wanted – you might think it borders on an obsession – so he started an apprenticeship with the architectural firm of Carloni and Camenisch in Lugano. A year later Botta designed his first building, a two-family house, at Morbio Superiore in Ticino, and that house is still standing today.

After his apprenticeship he went to the Art College in Milan for his baccalaureate, and then to Università Iuav di Venezia for his professional degree in 1969. During his time in Venice, Botta worked with architects Carlo Scarpa, Louis Kahn and Le Corbusier. Botta started his own architectural practice in Lugano in 1970.

Even his very first designs show what was to become his style: a strong sense of geometry, often based on simple shapes, while creating unique volumes of space. His buildings are often made of brick, yet his use of material is wide, varied, and often unique. His trademark style can be seen widely in Switzerland, particularly in his home canton of Ticino.

Religious works by Botta were shown in London, UK, at the Royal Institute of British Architects. He says, 'A church is the place, par excellence, of architecture. When you enter a church, you already are part of what has transpired and will transpire there. The church is a house that puts a believer in a dimension where he or she is the protagonist. The sacred directly lives in the collective. Man becomes a participant in a church, even if he never says anything.'

Botta's architecture is tied closely with nature, and its forms are simple. He believes that architecture is a basic need for man, and therefore he creates buildings that symbolise simplicity and the essentials. His style is in part defined by his client's needs. Most of his early work was planned and constructed on a tight budget, so he used low-cost materials, like concrete blocks. He believes that good architecture is possible regardless of the medium or material. Botta also believes that architecture is the formal expression of history. His job as an architect, to some degree, is to give validity to low-budget materials through thoughtful expression. There are lengthy explanations of these beautiful buildings available – but I prefer to just stand there and feel overwhelmed – and happy.

-Trudi B



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