

Piano playing, a big hobby in Switzerland

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WELLINGTON SWISS CLUB

FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

8 DEC.

Children's Christmas Party. 2pm at the Clubhouse. Bring a plate.

8 DEC.

Carol Singing, Sound Shell, Botanical Gardens, 6pm. The Swiss and German Clubs will sing together. Everybody welcome. There will be a sale of Christmas cookies next to the Sound Shell too. All proceeds go to the Red Cross. Please bring along any baking wrapped in suitable portions ready for sale.

14 DEC.

Adults' Christmas Party, 7.30pm. Members \$18.00, non-members \$20.00. BYO drinks. Please let us know by 11 Dec. at the latest.

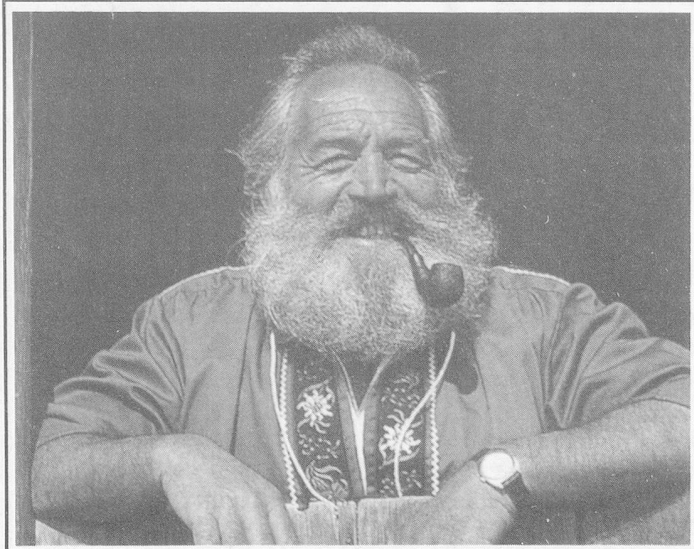
R.McK.

NEW SWISS BEARD KING

After four unsuccessful attempts, Silvio Thöni, 57, "Alphirt" on the Stavia Alp (GR) at long last became king at this year's "Internationalen Alpenbarttreffen" in Chur.

Silvio Thöni has lived on alps for the past 30 years. He has never travelled outside Switzerland. He only once went to Basle but did not like the noise, the traffic and the crowds. So he packed up his gear the very next day after his arrival and went back to his beloved mountains.

His biggest fans are the nuns from the St. Alberthaus nunnery in Ilanz, and this for a very good reason: he works for them during the winter months.



Silvio is a happy man and he loves to live alone with his animals high up in the Alps, surrounded by peace and beautiful scenery.

SELF-HELP SERVICE

A crafty farmer in Oberwil-Lieli (Aargau) came up with the novel idea of selling the milk from his farm around the clock from this specially designed self-help store built by the main road. By putting SFR 1.20 into the automatic vending machine, you receive one litre of fresh milk. However, you have to be careful to bring along your own container as these are not being provided.

In order to satisfy stringent health regulations, the milk is kept at a strict temperature of 4 degrees centigrades at all times and it is replenished at least twice a day.



The Milk-Chalet in Oberwil-Lieli where fresh milk is available 24 hours a day seven days a week.

NOTE TO SECRETARIES

Next issue of the Helvetia magazine: FEBRUARY 1997. All contributions must be in by 15 January. Many thanks for your kind cooperation.

MAD COW DISEASE

In order to restore confidence into the badly hit beef market, the Swiss Federal Council has decided that no cow born before December 1990 is allowed to enter the meat market. This decree affects 230,000 cows which must be destroyed before 1999. The loss in revenue for the 50,000 affected farmers amounts to some 320 million SFR.

By these measures, the Federal Council hopes to counteract all the negative feelings against beef generated by the mad cow disease. Farmers will receive a compensation of SFR 1000.- for each affected cow. A further SFR 400.- per cow will be paid by the Swiss Government for the transport, killing and disposal of the animals.

In the meantime a meat scandal has erupted in Switzerland. Some meat producers have tried to get rid of some beef by mixing it in with porc mince. There is at present a huge outcry amongst unsuspecting customers who realised afterwards that they might well have eaten some meat that could have come from some diseased animals.

PIANO PLAYING, A BIG HOBBY IN SWITZERLAND

In 17% of Swiss households there stands a piano, and in every fifth household, there is someone who can actually play the instrument (this means that in around 3% of the households there is someone who can play the piano but hasn't got one!!). These statistics indicate further that there are about half a million pianos in Switzerland of which 83% are in actual use.

An other surprising discovery was how intensive the Swiss are at playing the piano. One third of all piano players play every day for an average of one hour. Most of them do it mainly for relaxation. Most popular amongst the Swiss piano players is classical music with jazz, pop and country music only amounting to about 20%.



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