

Kiwis get in touch with their roots : a family reunion in Switzerland

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Kiwis get in touch with their roots **A Family Reunion in Switzerland**



Group at the top of Rigi at 5am to watch the sun rise.

The family reunion was organised to take place on the Rigi mountain in Switzerland. The New Zealanders took the opportunity to be able to meet up with the Swiss relatives they had never seen before. The thought of not been able to speak Swiss didn't stop 30 New Zealanders from making their way over to the other side of the world. The Styger family members, that immigrated to New Zealand were Anna, Regina and Anton.

The New Zealand born people that attended the weekend were: Laura Hiestand, Freda and Kevin Hurley, Monica and Trevor Hughes, Albert and Mary Dettling, Brian and Viv Hiestand, Maurice and Trish Hiestand, Eddie and Linda Hiestand, Denie and Shelley Hiestand, Helena and John Goodin, John and Renata Gwerder, Anne Dewar, John and Barbara Styger, Stephen Styger, Marlene Kissick, Pamela Hawken, Denise Pope, Beverley Meier, Christopher Meier, Nicola Paki Paki, Karen Hiestand, Bernadine Juretich, and Hayley Goodin.

Everyone made their own way to Switzerland and met up on the Rigi on the 30th June 2006.

SATURDAY JULY 1ST: THE MAIN DAY

A large number of people travelled to the Rigi, some from overseas, and arrived on Friday. Saturday was great chance for the Swiss families to come early and start the reconnection process by having drinks and fun throughout the day.

12noon - Lunch for those that are on the Rigi - at the Hostellerie Afternoon - Walking on the Rigi - A chance to explore one of the many walking trails on the Rigi. There are a wide variety of walks from easy to difficult.

MAIN EVENT: 5:00pm Saturday Evening - Banquet Dinner/Celebration of our Heritage - Hostellerie Hotel, Rigi-Kaltbad, Central Switzerland. Starting with drinks and receiving name-tags, followed by a welcome

and Dinner at 6:00pm.

8:00pm - Swiss Traditional Folk Performance by a fun, local, interactive Swiss group, plus a special yodeling performance by Heidi, a real Swiss farmgirl from the Alps.

9:30pm - Chance to dance and connect with your relatives for chatting, and some fun music for everyone to enjoy. A Swiss DJ played a selection of old-time and more popular tunes for our enjoyment. The Kiwis tried to perform the Haka.

SUNDAY:

Sunrise - Walk to the Top of the Rigi - Most of the Kiwis were up a 4am, if they had gone to bed for the walk to the top for sunrise. There were no trains at that time of day but it is approx. 45 minutes to an hour, steep up hill climb/walk which was a wonderful opportunity - 11:00am Church, in the special historic church in the rock alcove 'Felsenkapelle.'

12:15pm - Steam Train Trip. A trip on the world's first steam train in Europe. It took us from the Rigi Kaltbad (where the Hostellerie is located) to the top of the Rigi (the Kulm) on the cog railway. Lunchtime (12:30-2:30pm) - After Church or the Steam Train Trip, the Hostellerie had an outdoor traditional Swiss lunch with Swiss sausages!

5:00pm - Time to say Goodbye (Hostellerie Banquet Room) to those that are leaving the mountain. Official end to the family reunion weekend.

Plans are to hold another reunion in New Zealand in 2009.



Laura at the reunion dinner. At 90 years, she even went to the Top of the World, Jungfrau!

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