

# Switzerland has its record-breaking tunnel

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Monique Hetherington (née Leuenberger)



Following a five year struggle with Motor Neurone Disease, Monique passed away at the Cardrona Rest Home in Putaruru on 3rd July 2010, aged 47 years.

Monique was born in Putaruru, on 9th November 1962, to Heidi and Heinz Leuenberger. She was a younger sister to Charlie and Beatrice, and later also a big sister to Michelle.

Monique's childhood years were spent in Putaruru, where she attended primary and secondary school. After leaving school, she worked as a toll operator for 18 years, until automatic dialing brought on redundancy with the closure of the Toll Exchange.

Monique had two trips to Switzerland - the first as an 11 year old in 1972, and then again in 1984 to visit Beatrice and Charlie, who were both living there at the time.

Monique's association with the Hamilton Swiss Club dates back to her childhood, where the annual picnic was always a highlight. During the 1980's, she often helped in the kitchen preparing supper for the card evenings which were regularly held in Putaruru at that time. She also once participated in a folk dancing group, and attended various Club functions over the years.

In January, 1986, Monique married Kevin Hetherington, and later that year, their daughter Rachel was born. In 1994 the marriage ended, and Monique moved to Whangamata, where she remained until shortly after the onset of her illness, diagnosed in 2005. In 2006 she returned to Putaruru and lived with her parents for several months, before ultimately moving to the Cardrona Rest Home, where she spent her final four years.

Because of her illness, Monique could no longer attend family events, but Rachel did get around this by getting married in the garden at Cardrona. She was also delighted to become Nana to her little grandson, Angus.

According to her wishes, Monique was farewelled at a private family service. Although finally released from her suffering, she is and will always be greatly missed by all her family and friends. *BL*

*The Hamilton Swiss Club and the Swiss Society of New Zealand extend their sincere sympathy to the Leuenberger family.*

Switzerland has its record-breaking tunnel

The rail tunnel that goes through the Gotthard massif is now the world's longest at 57 kilometres. The project was both on time and on budget.

The Gotthard Base Tunnel will be the most important element of the new flat rail link through the Alps. Rising no higher than 550m above sea level, it will reduce the route from Zurich to Milan by one-and-a-half hours. It is also a cornerstone of the policy to move freight in particular from road to rail. Voters approved the concept and the financing of the tunnel in the 1990s.



The miners are celebrating the breakthrough in front of the giant tunnel drill "Sissi"

The base tunnel is expected to open, once fully equipped, in 2017, but AlpTransit has suggested that it may even be ready by the end of 2016.

In total, an estimated 24 million tonnes of rock have been excavated - the equivalent of five times the volume of the Great Pyramid of Giza. The total cost of the project is SFr9.74 billion.

The tunnel has had plenty of detractors. And indeed it hasn't all been plain sailing. The Alps' varied geology in particular posed a problem. The Piora Fault Zone's poor quality rock threatened to put the whole project on hold until engineers discovered better layers deeper below. Crumbly rock north of Sedrun was overcome using mining technology.

Around 3,500 people, locals and those involved, were watching the breakthrough from various locations. The public could follow via a television live link. In addition, more than 300 members of the Swiss and international media were present.

*from swissinfo*