

Swiss Club news from around New Zealand

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Taranaki

Past Events:

On Saturday 19th November the committee held its annual barbeque at the Club house. This is a great time for the committee and their families to catch up with each other after another busy year. We enjoyed barbequed bratwurst, cervelats and delicious meat patties, with a wonderful array of salads, topped off with fruit salad and ice cream. Everyone enjoyed the food, beverages and great company ... what more could you want?!!!! Thank you to Lisette for organising the meats and dessert ... and to everyone for their salads and cleaning up.

On Sunday 28th November we held our annual Christmas Shoot / Keglen. Numbers were a little down on previous years, but none-the-less about 30 people participated in the competition, and eleven children enjoyed creating their bells and angels. But what they enjoyed even more was the appearance of Father Christmas after a delicious pot-luck lunch!!! Every child received a small gift, and then prize-giving was held for the adults. It was interesting to see that all the children waited until the last child had received their present before opening them!!! Well done, children!!! There were several lucky number draws, and Mark handed out some of the shooting trophies won over the last few months. Thank you Mark and Emmi for, once again, organising a wonderful day for us. We appreciate the work you put in to this event, and hope that next year we can enjoy a bigger crowd!!! If anyone has any ideas on how to make this event even more successful, please let Mark know. We appreciate any feedback. MD

New Year's Eve ... well, what can we say about the weather????!!! We were still very surprised with sixteen camper-vanners braving the awfully wet conditions. Fortunately there was enough room on firm ground to park the vans. Happy hour was a fun affair with a few jokes and games to keep everyone amused. We were grateful to see so many of our Swiss members and their friends come along for the evening ... we, once again, enjoyed the entertainment provided by Alan and Pam Southey and Trevor Sharpe ... you are terrific and everyone enjoys your music. With the odd skit or joke in between the music, a great tombola which was very well supported and then supper was soon here. At midnight we toasted the New Year in, and we hope that for many of our members who had a tough year, 2012 will be much brighter and better. Our Patron, Sepp, was enjoying the toasting so much that he did two rounds!!! Good on you Sepp, four kisses are always better than two!!!

On New Year's night about 45 people attended a delicious smorgasbord at the Stratford Club. It was great to see a mixture of Swissies and Campervanners and friends mingling, and making a great start to the New Year!!! Let's hope that it continues that way!!!

We would like to thank everyone for coming to this weekend ... it does make it so easy to organise when everyone is there to have a good time!!! Thank you.

Ruedi and Lisette

On behalf of the Swiss Club, we would like to thank Ruedi and Lisette for organising the weekend which was enjoyed by all. We're already looking forward to the next one!!!

Future Events:

February 2 & 16: Johnny is awaiting you at the Swiss Club

for Keglen ... please make his night and turn up!!! This group of people have much fun and laughter, and enjoy a delicious supper too. I'm sure that they enjoy the chatting as much as the skittles!!!

February 4: The Kaponga Fire Brigade will be holding their centennial on this day.

We have agreed to enter a float, which Zeno is organising. Anyone wishing to participate must assemble at the Kaponga Rugby Club at 10.30am in costume with bells etc. The Fire Brigade will be holding a fun family day thereafter, so come along and enjoy a fun day with your Swiss friends.

February 12: Our ever popular and social annual picnic will be held on this day. There is plenty of entertainment at your disposal ... of course the highlight is the Schwingen (for juniors and adults), children's activities, shot put, live accordion music, a great tombola (raffle) ... there will be barbequed Swiss sausages (*these will be served from 12.00pm to 1.00pm, and then from 3.00pm*), beverages, and ice creams for your taste buds ... so come along and enjoy a great day and catch up with friends and make new acquaintances. All we need is fine weather!!! **Participants in the Schwingen must register by 12.30pm ... any later and you'll miss out!!!**

We are also fortunate to have Heliview coming to the picnic ... Richard and Jolanda Foale (members of the Swiss Club) own this helicopter business and will take flights around the area or the mountain ... OF COURSE ALL OF THIS IS WEATHER-PERMITTING!!! So if you're interested and the weather is fine, get ready for a great, memorable flight!!!

At a recent committee meeting we decided to hold our Swiss Society Shot put event at the picnic,



in the hope that we will have better weather than in May when we have usually held the competitions!!! Here's hoping!!! Please remember that to participate in medals competitions you must be a member of the Taranaki Swiss Club and the Swiss Society of New Zealand. We look forward to increased participation which would mean more medals for our stronger members!!! 20% of all participants receive a medal, and there is also a separate competition for juniors (under 16). The entry fee to participate is \$5.00 per person. The Swiss Society Shooting competition events can be done at the March, April and May shoots, and the keglen and jassen competitions will be held in May. We would love to increase our participation in these events, so please take part in as many of the events as you can. Thanks!!!

March 1 & 15: Keglen at 8.00pm. Come along and enjoy the company, a drink or two, and a delicious supper (bring a plate). Johnny and his team ensure that you have fun ... skittle for the trophies and then a fun game or two.

March 5: The AGM of the Taranaki Swiss Club will be held at the Club house, Grace Avenue, Kaponga at 8.00pm. Please come along and hear what has happened in the past year, and how the new year is shaping up. If you have any ideas for activities in our new calendar year, please talk to Othmar, Zeno or Marianne. *Remigi has received the "Karabiner Shooting" medals and these will be presented at the conclusion of the Annual General Meeting.*

March 17 & 18: We will be hosted by the Wellington Swiss Club for the semi-final of the Cowbell competitions. The approximate cost for travel and accommodation, based on 25 people on the bus, is \$100.00 per person. This is an excellent price for a weekend of fun and laugh-

ter (low cost due to Othmar driving the bus ... thanks, Othmar!). Would anyone interested in taking part in this weekend please contact Othmar on 06 278 6878 or Marianne on 06 762 8757? Your support of this trip would be appreciated.

March 25: SHOOTING - Please note change of date due to Wellington bus trip. The small bore rifle club will be holding their Championship / Society Shoots from 1.00pm, so come along and support Mark. He willingly gives coaching tips, so come and improve your shooting prowess!!! A Society Medal could be yours!!!

Your committee will organise a new Calendar of Events and Newsletter after the AGM to let you know when our future events are. If you have any new ideas or suggestions of improvements we could make, please tell a committee member and we'll see what we can do. Your support of as many functions as possible is always appreciated. MD

Swiss army "labels/stamps"

These were given to me as a child & appear to be related to World War II. Can anyone help to identify them please? Phone John, 04 5861963, or email: <mailto:jmehl@xtra.co.nz>.

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Wellington

Past Events:

27 November: Soup Lunch at the Clubhouse

Well, that's what was announced in our program, but as our toilets were not quite ready yet, it had to be modified to "Jassen with Coffee and Cake in the Cave". Eight keen Jassers



Jassers in Trudi's cave

turned up and had a pleasant afternoon playing cards to their hearts' content. tb

Samichlaus

On Sunday 4th December Samichlaus visited the Wellington Club House. The children were busy crafting little Samichlaus



The little ones are just as friendly as the real ones...

figures with toilet paper rolls when we heard a bell ringing. That was Samichlaus and his friend Schmutzli arriving. They were on foot, as they had left their donkey in a meadow for a rest.



Smiling Samichlaus and Schmutzli

Samichlaus was delighted to see all the Samichlaus figurines the kids had made, and Schmutzli was happily surprised that amongst them was also a Schmutzli figurine: looking like Samichlaus but dressed in black. One child had thought of him too!

Some children performed music or songs. We even got to watch a dance (thanks Ariana!).

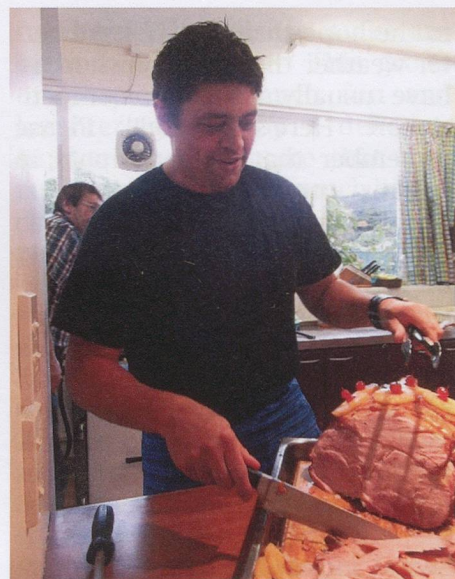
Samichlaus knew a lot of things about the children. Schmutzli was helping him remember sometimes. Although some children looked slightly worried at the sight of Schmutzli, all the children had behaved well during the year and got a present with peanuts, mandarins, chocolates and cookies from Samichlaus and Schmutzli.

A big thank you to Bruce, Barbara and Sandie for their help to make this day special for our little ones!

Christmas dinner

This Christmas dinner had a lot of attendees. After the Sangria we had a rich buffet of 14 different salads, many contributed by the members, and our traditional hams, cooked to perfection by Peter and professionally carved by our chef Clinton; I hope you come again, Clinton; you won't always have to work! After the traditional strawberries we had coffee and delicious Brezeli, offered and made by Glenys Seiler. Thank you all!

The tables were beautifully decorated with Grittibenz and the Samichlaus (and Schmutzli!) figurines that the kids had made the week before. And as in the



Clinton carving the ham



People queuing up for Christmas dinner

last many years, we had a beautiful tree, donated by Peter Hynes again - thank you, Peter!

The Simons family read the Christmas story, with some parts in French and in German.

Our president Trudi had had a prior visit of Samichlaus, who had given her some Christmas presents for club members he wanted to thank. I won't name them here, as I would be afraid of forgetting someone. But the list of members who contributed time and helped the club during 2011 is long and Santa had brought lots of gifts! Thanks to all of you!

And thank you to our president for organising this nice surprise. Thanks too for stepping up when we needed a president in 2011! OS

Sunday, 10th December: Carol Singing at the Botanical Garden

Our "scratch choir" of Swiss club members, plus some Ger-



man friends who are happy to be "ring-ins for a sing-in", performed again at the festival of European Carols in the Botanical Gardens. The audience of picnicking families enjoyed our performance of old favourites, and we went on to lustily lead the audience sing-along. *CL*

Future Events:

12 February - Shooting Practice

Shooting Practice and the Medal Shooting Competition are taking place on Paul Scherrer's farm at 146 Mangaroa Valley Rd, Mangaroa Valley.

For more information contact our Rifle master John Jordan 528 7846.

26 February - Family day at the Jäggi Park

A day not to be missed! The Family Day will take place at Heinz and Trix Jäggi in Akatarawa, Upper Hutt, starting at 11:30.

The Jäggis have created a wonderful, ever-expanding playground.

Please bring your own picnic/BBQ food.

For further information and for bookings (so the organizers know how many people to expect and for cancellation if the weather is marginal), please contact: Sandie 528 6960 or Odile 586 3095

26 February - Soup Lunch at the Clubhouse

12:00 noon: soup lunch at the clubhouse. Jass afternoon from 1pm onwards. If you'd like to come for lunch, please let Trudi (56 28 019) know, otherwise just turn up for cards. If you don't play cards bring along your Rummikub or anything else you'd like to play - or your knitting/embroidery/crochet. *OS*

Would you like a bit of a progress report on the toilets? Well, we'll have the best toilets by the time you read this! And they'll



Flemming doing wonders with paint

just look like toilets, and you won't see all the work that has gone into them: Hans Glauser did the paper work and the electrical work, Hans Scherrer did the carpentry, Heinz Jäggi prepared the floor for tiling, a plasterer plastered, Flemming Sörensen, John Alderdice and Erika Hagen did the painting, Heinz Jäggi and his friend Joss Wynands did the tiling, the plumber installed the toilets and the hand basins. They all spent hours, and some spent days for the benefit of the club. We are very, very grateful to them all! *tb*

Auckland

The committee of the Auckland Swiss Club wishes all members and their families a healthy, happy 2012. It will be a special year for us - in July we will be taking over the running of the New Zealand Swiss Society, which includes publishing the Helvetia. Watch this space!

Past Events: 2011

Läbchueche Decorating - Sunday 20 November

This time we had invited people to decorate their Läbchueche at the Danish House because we thought the location might be more suitable. Judging by the numbers, that didn't seem to be the case.



Biscuit painting

Nevertheless, the 13 people (7 adults and 6 children) who turned up again had lots of fun, experimenting with chocolate, marzipan, sugar flowers and other edible decoration materials. There is always a bit of a competition amongst the artistic participants, which makes it even more entertaining. After three hours of being creative, everyone left with very unique gifts for Christmas.

Because there is always too much going on in the weeks leading up to Christmas we decided to organise a midwinter Christmas Chocolate Event next year. Mark your calendar for a special "Chocolate-Work-Sunday" on 17.6.2012. *By Erika Lanz-Wetli*

Yodeling for a cause - Sunday 20 November

What a great finale to Pia's success in the New York Marathon this was! Over 100 people



Our great Yodlers

attended the evening, every one of them left with a smile. The program was varied, with Pia, her Mum Ursula, and even daughter Fiona presenting items, as well as our Auckland Yodlers, and our Alphorn players. Amazing talents, it was a privilege to be there and enjoy. The whole evening was exceptionally well organised, never a dull moment.



Like mother like daughter

Many thanks to Pia, the two Ursulas, the Yodlers and Alphorn players, Adrian, and everyone else involved.

Working Bee - Saturday 26 November

Thanks to everyone who turned up and spruced the place up for the old man from the North Pole.

Santa - Sunday 04 December

The highlight of the Auckland Swiss year for many of the children and their families - once again a successful day. The weather did not exactly play its part this time, so our Santa had to rely on more mundane transport rather than arriving by air. Spirits were not dampened, the children were still fascinated by 'the REAL Santa', and he had something good to say to them all. Thanks again Osci, you are a star! A lot of socialising followed, over Bratwurst, Cervelats and Erdbeertörtli.



They must be exceptionally good children - all smiles!

We were delighted to welcome our Swiss Ambassador, Dr Marion Weichelt Krupski, and her family. They managed to talk to many of us, and we look forward to seeing more of them.

Christmas Carol Singing - Saturday 10 December

I am not sure what we did different this year - we could not believe that instead of a dozen or so of our family members like all the other years, some 50 people turned up and joined in the singing. We hope you enjoyed it, we did anyway, and look forward to seeing you again this year.

Future Events:

Pub night - Friday 03 Feb from 8pm, Howick Club, 107 Botany Rd, Howick

We had such an amazing time there last year, let's do it again!

Ask at reception to find out where the reservation for the Swiss club is placed. Check it out at: www.howickclub.co.nz

Jass - Friday 10 Feb 7.30pm sharp, Danish Club, 6 Rockridge Avenue, Penrose

Yes, we have broken the tradition, and are starting in February already. Some of us just could not wait any longer. I believe there are many players out there who fancy a game of jass, but are just not quite brave enough. Do give it a go, we are really quite a friendly lot!

Picnic - Sunday 12 Feb at the Swiss farm. Gates open at 10am. Lunch at 12.30pm.

Come and enjoy a fun day at the Swiss Farm. You are invited to participate in the Society Games if you like: Kegeln, Stein-stossen, Shooting (the Shooting range is only open between 10 and 12)

Or you may want to join in to other games which we organise for children and adults. Or just enjoy the company, the scenery, the Barbeque.

Bratwurst, Cervelats, Cabanossi, Wienerli, Bread, Nussgipfel, Coffee and drinks will be available.

Feel free to combine the Picnic with a sleepover on the farm on Saturday (tent, bunks, floor, etc). Let Marcel know if you intend to

do that; he will make sure the gate is open for you.

Shooting weekend 18/19 Feb: Obligatorisch / Feldschiessen

Contact:

Henry Werffeli 09 4103476 or werffeli@orcon.co.nz

Looking forward to MARCH AND BEYOND:

Pub night Friday 02 March
Bricklane Bar & Restaurant, 5 Clark St, New Lynn
www.bricklane.co.nz

Jassen - Friday 09 March

Tramp in the Hunuas - Sunday 25 March

Haven't you always wanted to go to the Hunuas, where we get a lot of our water from, and never got there? Here is your chance to do a walk with stimulating company! More in the March Helvetia.

Auckland AGM - Monday evening 30 April

Keep the date free!

Market Day - Saturday 05 May

After the success of 2010 and 2011, Tanja, the driving force behind the Market days, is brave enough to organise another one. They have been very popular. Make sure you express your interest early enough to have a stand with Swiss / Continental produce and goods.

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NZ Swiss Society AGM in Auckland - Queen's Birthday weekend 2-4 June

We will welcome all the other NZ Swiss Clubs to Auckland. This is always a fun weekend, and you won't even have to travel far!

OTHER NEWS AND BITS

Zwetschgen (Damson plums): This time last year we advertised these delicious Swiss plums. It looks like the crop is not going to be plentiful this year, and you have to wait until 2013 to place your order. We will email you should there be a change!

Your ideas and your help are needed: As we will be taking over the publishing of 'Helvetia' from July, we would love to hear from you. Any help is appreciated, you don't HAVE to be a writer!

Don't forget YOUR farm: Swiss club members and their families are welcome to spend time there. A great holiday place, escape the city! Arrange with Marcel: Ruedi@orcon.net.nz

If you like to find out more about the club and what we are doing: Check out the website: www.swiss.org.nz/auckland

Our vice president has been very diligent keeping it up to date. You will find the Swiss Club Calendar and much more there. Thank you Adrian!

Nelly Steinemann



Past Events:

Christmas Function - After a very dry November, our farmers and gardeners were all getting desperate for some rain, and it finally came on December 4th, the Sunday of our Christmas

function! It started out as drizzle, and remained wet throughout the day.

However, we weren't about to let a bit of rain put a "dampner" on the day, and it didn't seem to stop people from coming to Newstead School for our final get-together for 2011. A sheltered spot was found to set up the barbecue, and tables were set up in the school hall for the children's activities. It was soon too wet to play outside, so the children were kept busy indoors making Christmas cards, and decorating baked gingerbread men, hearts and Christmas trees with coloured icing and other edible decorations. All the colourfully decorated shapes and cards (some written to parents, others to Santa with a list of Christmas wishes), were later displayed on a table for everyone to see. It was a delight to see that so much effort had gone into these wonderful creations.

Outside, seats were set up under a covered area where we served grilled sausages and bread for lunch - a great opportunity for a relaxed catch-up and chat with friends.

After lunch, raffle tickets were sold, before the afternoon programme in the hall. With everyone inside and the children seated on the floor, the guest of honour arrived - Santa had arrived just in time to see the Christmas play, in which all the children took part. Each child was given a role to play in the Christmas story, which was written and narrated by Ursula. Even the youngest child, at seven months, had a part - as the baby Jesus!

After the play, everyone joined in to sing a few Christmas carols, and then the children were able to collect their presents from Santa - an advent calendar and a small bag of 'goodies'. Tables with coffee and baking had been set up under shelter outside, and after everyone had waved goodbye to Santa for another year, it was time for some afternoon tea.

It was still raining, so people returned indoors for the day's final activity - the raffle draw. We had received quite a few donated prizes, including four home made 'Zopf', which were very popular and among some of the first prizes to be selected from a total of about 18 draws.

The afternoon was drawing to a close, and good wishes for Christmas and New Year were exchanged as people began to depart. Despite the weather, an enjoyable and relaxed day was had by everyone - and the farmers were smiling!!

A big thank you to everyone who brought baking for afternoon tea, donated a raffle prize, and who helped on the day. *BL*

Future Events:

Shooting Practice - 11th February 10am to 12 noon at Elmiger's property in Karapiro.

Shooting - 50 metre Swiss Society medal competition - 18th February - 9am to 1 pm also at Elmiger's property in Karapiro. For further information or carpooling contact the Riflemaster, Hans Vetsch 07 855-3294.

Annual Picnic will be held on **Sunday 19th February** at the Newstead School on Morrinsville Road starting 11am. Please arrive early to avoid delays on the bowling alleys. The usual grilled Bratwurst and Cervelats will be available for sale together with a great selection of home-made baking, coffee, cold drinks etc. There will be a bit of entertainment for the children and the adventure playground is always an attraction. The swimming pool should also be available but it is up to parents to take responsibility for looking after their own children in the pool as well as in the playground. Please remember to bring along some seating so that you can enjoy the lovely shaded area under the big trees. If anyone is able to help with writing bowling scores or

serving food please contact Vreni on 07 855 3294 or email Anita.zuber@xtra.co.nz. We are always looking for extra helpers, especially during the hours of 12.30 and 2pm.

All Hamilton Club members should receive a newsletter/calendar either via post or email early February.

For further queries please contact Beatrice on 07 8437971 or Anita 0274 985170. AZ

Well done Hans, on finishing the Round the Lake Taupo Cycle Classic of 160kms. The condi-



Hans Vetsch, Hamilton Swiss Club Riflemaster

tions were not the best with gale force winds making life on a bike very difficult. Maybe some more of our Swiss friends are up for the challenge in the future? V.A.

Wanted to Buy

A large Swiss cowbell please. We have Swiss heritage and have recently holidayed in Switzerland. We would love to purchase a cowbell to display in our home. Pat Steiner 07 828 8598, 027 240 9059. Email: oldlnp@xtra.co.nz

Robert Blattler

1930 - 2011

Robert Blattler was born in Hergiswil, Nidwalden. He was the 4th of 11 children, growing up on a mountain farm. At the age of 7 Robi and his 9 remaining siblings lost their mother and the young baby sister due to complications at childbirth with her 11th child at home in the deep snow. They then had to grow up under the strict command of an aunt. He was a farmer, from an early age spending summers looking after stock on Alps and helping on the home farm during the rest of the year. The home farm property was split between Robert and his brother Jakob, my father.

After about 20 years Robert sold his part to Jakob and immigrated to New Zealand in 1972. He worked his way up from labourer to share-milker in Tirau, Putaruru and later bought his own farm in Waihou (near Te Aroha).

Bad knees forced his early retirement. He bought a town house near the mountain of Te Aroha. Robert enjoyed his many friends and was always a happy companion to many of us. He hardly ever missed events organised by the Hamilton Swiss club and would travel for miles to play Swiss cards, often until late into the night. He was often invited to meals and talked about it in great details afterwards as he appreciated it so much. It was always fun to visit Robi and he was proud to serve his own home brew with Kaffi on these occasions. Robi said that he did not want to be buried in New Zealand. In 2006, he decided to sell up everything and booked himself into a lodge in his old home town of Hergiswil where he could spend the rest of his life near his 5 remaining siblings and old school friends. Many of his Kiwi-Swiss friends have since visited him there and staff at the lodge confirmed to me that these visits have always put the spark back into Robi, they were his highlights. His health deteriorated slowly and he spent his final days with kidney failure in Hospital.

Anna Blattler, Te Aroha

Zurich hotels and their Ramadan guests

Hoteliers in Zurich have been taking lessons in how to cater for Muslim guests during the holy month of Ramadan as they are keen to please their fasting and free-spending guests. Zurich Tourism got together with Muslim organisations in the city to arrange a series of workshops. High on the list of topics was catering for guests who do not eat or drink between sunrise and sunset during Ramadan and require specially prepared meals.

Dietary requirements do not end at when Muslim visitors are allowed to eat. Islamic law also prescribes what food is permissible (Halal), which excludes the meat of carnivorous or omnivorous animals and of those that were not slaughtered in the correct way.

Zurich Tourism has drawn up a list of hotels that are prepared to meet these culinary requirements and offer other Ramadan-friendly services.

The main reason for Zurich's efforts is the spending power of holidaymakers from oil-rich and largely recession-proof countries.

swissinfo