

**Zeitschrift:** Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand  
**Band:** 81 (2015)  
**Heft:** [6]

**Vorwort:** Word from the president  
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## Word from the president

Dear Readers

Welcome to our jam-packed Christmas issue of the Helvetia! It seems as if I had only just done one for the festive season, and yet another year has passed. The way we celebrate Christmas back home is certainly very different to New Zealand. And because it is also the time to reminisce about the old days, I have collated a page for you which highlights some of our best memories of the festive season. Alex's article about "what is Heimat" is certainly also a topic most will think about when sitting around the Christmas tree.

A special thank you goes to Diccon Bewes from Bern who has contributed an article for this issue of our Helvetia. His newest book "Around Switzerland in 80 Maps" is certainly a great Xmas gift idea!

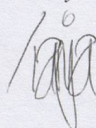
Someone that is tirelessly working behind the scenes to fight for our AHV and doesn't get much recognition is Peter Ehrler from New Plymouth, our ASO delegate. He has been doing an amazing job trying to change the way the pension system works here in New Zealand. Next time you see him, please thank him personally for the great work he is doing – even if you are still young (-ish), who knows, maybe because of his efforts you will be receiving the Swiss pension one day!

It is with great sadness that we farewelled Ursula Nixon last month. She was a valued Helvetia team member, hardly missed a meeting and always brought some cake along because she knew my boys would love it in their lunchboxes the next day. Ursula will be greatly missed. We wish Edwin and Melanie all the best and hope still to see them at some of our Swiss functions in the future.

Our Ambassador David Vogelsanger has re-published a booklet from 1967 called "The First Swiss in New Zealand", written by Irene Weber-de Candolle. The embassy has been very kind to gift every Swiss Society member a copy of this booklet, just in time for Christmas. So make yourself a cup of coffee, sit down and enjoy reading the interesting stories about the first Swiss settlers in this country (only after you've finished reading the Helvetia of course, haha...)

Christmas! A special time to spend with family and friends, maybe the chance for a holiday and certainly time to enjoy the warmth of summer. On this note I wish you all a wonderful festive season and only the very, very best for 2016.

Liebi Grüessli



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We thank our valued Advertisers for their support over the year. You are of great importance to the ongoing success of the Helvetia.

A big thank you also goes to McCollam's Printing and Stephen White for their generous and professional services in printing the Helvetia and to Mail Distribution Services and Wayne Longley, who handle the distribution of the Helvetia admirably.

Season's Greetings, Swiss Society Committee and Helvetia Team

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