

From the President

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From the President

My father was born 80 years ago. In the same year, the Swiss Banking Secrecy Act was created and Davos celebrated the first ever T-bar in the world. 80 years ago was also the year when the first Helvetia was published! Unlike the Swiss Banking Secrets, the Helvetia still exists and is going stronger than ever!

Happy 80th Anniversary Helvetia – what a milestone!

This special Birthday Edition has prompted us to look back, do a lot of research and take you down memory lane. We have some very exciting articles and extracts from old magazines in store for you and hope you'll treasure this special 80th Anniversary issue.



Placard of the Davos ski school, promoting the ski lift. Source: www.davos.ch



February 1969 at the Auckland Swiss Farm

A few of us around the country were lucky enough to be invited to the 1st of August National Day celebration at the Swiss Embassy in Wellington. I thought this was an excellent opportunity to visit the National Library of New Zealand to look at old issues of the Helvetia magazine. The Alexander Turnbull Library is the National archive for historic issues; which includes our Helvetia from 1941-1963 (newer issues are stored at the National Library). To get access to view these magazines, you have to apply in advance with two ID documents, you are screened on entry and not even allowed to take a pencil inside. Luckily I was able to take my camera with me since photocopies cost \$25 each!

Fortunately, Herbert from Hamilton joined me in the 'secure reading room' (we had to be really quiet, which wasn't easy...), and together, we were looking through hundreds and hundreds of old Helvetia magazines – some of them so thin and fragile we hardly dared turning the pages. Fascinating really how life used to be so different and how emigrating as far away as New Zealand would have been a life-time commitment. Only few were ever able to visit their home country again. Aren't we spoilt these days with more or less affordable flights, the internet and Skype!

The oldest Helvetia issue that the Turnbull Library archive has is from October 1941 – an interesting read! I was still determined to find older Helvetia issues though and was super excited when the Swiss National Library confirmed that they archive Helvetia magazines right back to 1935! They have a handful of issues missing, but have a more or less complete collection of the last 80 years. I'm delighted to be able to show you the complete 1st ever Helvetia published in October 1935 which we printed on page 7-11 for you.

Just to clarify, yes the first issue is from

1935 (which is only 79 years ago). But this also means that it is the 80th year the Helvetia has been in print. And since we now had to change the "Year 79" to "Year 80" we thought it's time to celebrate it's success.

Our 80th Anniversary issue has required a lot of work and research and I would like to thank everyone who contributed of any sort very much for their efforts. A special thank you goes to Nadine Martinez Stanley who created an amazing front page for this issue and also Mathias Weichert at the Swiss National Library who spent hours trying to find certain articles that we were interested in. Also thank you to everyone that has given us old photos to make this issue even more special.

Since your fingers will by now be twitching to find these old articles, it leaves me to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Enjoy this special time with your family and friends and treasure the good times.

Tschüssli,



Edith Hess and her boys at the parade to celebrate the 25th Jubilee of the Taranaki Club



Carnival at the Hamilton Swiss Club



At the parade in Taranaki celebrating 25 years of their Swiss club