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short hours I had learnt such a lot about the joys and difficulties of life on a farm. Thank you Taranaki Friends for an amazing weekend! See you all same time next year in Wellington! MBG

COLONIAL KNOB WALK

Sunday, 29th May saw us keen trampers taking to the hills above Porirua and Tawa. The name of Porirua is thought to be derived from Parirua meaning two harbours. The area was first settled in the 1820's when whaling stations were established on Mana Island and on the coast. The city now has 40,000 dwellers. Tawa is named after the grove of tawa trees that once grew there.

It was the first time that we walked on the remnants of a peneplain - an eroded land mass - that existed 30-40 million years ago! Earthquakes have since raised the peneplain and erosion has modified it to form these hills.

After a steep track through kohekohe/

tawa forest, we arrived at the summit and enjoyed a most majestic view over Mana and Kapiti Islands, the drowned river valleys that make up Porirua Harbour and in the south the Kaikura Ranges. And this all under a perfect blue sky and astoundingly warm sunshine!

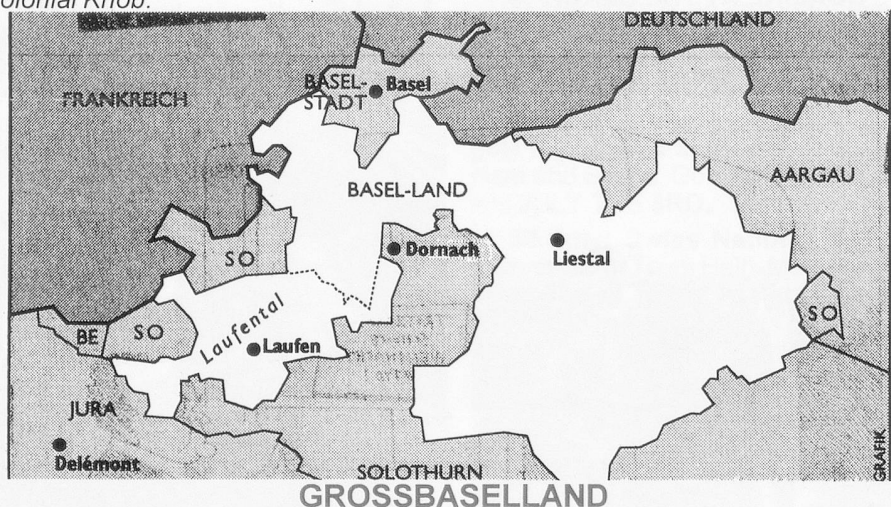
On our way back we passed two idyllic reservoirs, full of ducks, which were built in the late 19th century to supply Porirua Hospital, but became redundant when the hospital was connected to the Porirua City water supply.

The Colonial Knob Track took us four and a half hours in a moderate walking tempo. The top section was exposed to strong winds, so it paid to carry warm clothing, food and drink.

To crown off a special day, we were invited to Christine Staudenmann and Murray Hughes place for coffee and Gugelhupf. With Champagne we toasted Theres Hartmann who celebrated her birthday. MBG

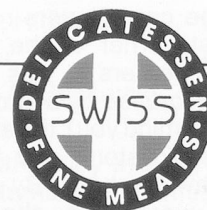


Murray Hughes with Sonya, Mr. and Mrs. Ammann, Christine Staudenmann with Nico, Vreni Madgwick, Monika Sörensén, Lotti Napp and Peter Graf on top of the Colonial Knob.



With the incorporation of the Laufental into Baselland, this half-canton, with typical "Baselbeppi" tongue in cheek, calls itself now "GROSS-BASELSTADT". The half-canton has now grown from 428 to 518 square km and its population increased by 15,337 to 248,500 inhabitants.

But looking at the map, there are still pieces of land belonging to Solothurn and Berne totally isolated from their own cantons. Obviously tradition and fierce Swiss stubbornness still prevails in Switzerland over logic and economical realities.



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GREEDY DOCTORS

The Bernese association of health insurances has taken action against doctors who deliberately overcharged them for services rendered to their members. So far 13 doctors were requested to refund to the insurances a total of one million SFR in overcharges. Recently a doctor in Neuenburg was required by a court to refund 41,000 SFR to one insurance company alone. And, according to the association, this is only the tip of the iceberg. Like in New Zealand, doctors are amongst the highest paid professionals in Switzerland and it is appalling to see that some of them have to resort to fraud to even further increase their income.

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