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students do not even know their own country, let alone the whereabouts and history of other countries. Blatant examples are New Zealand TV quiz shows containing questions on geography. Such questions are met more often than not by a blank stare on the part of the contestants. Ask any Kiwi what the capital city of California is, where Helsinki is situated or what the word "Andorra" means to them and you will receive the most amazing answers. But do not blame your Kiwi friends, it is the modern education system that is at fault.

Teachers have reported that some students are totally incapable of multiplying or dividing even the simplest figures without the use of a calculator. Worse, they are incapable of assessing whether the result appearing on the calculator is correct or false, whether it is plausible or totally off the mark. If, through them punching in a wrong number, the calculator produces a result with two or three zeroes too many, an amazing number of students would not even spot the error or realise that the result is totally illogical.

Blind faith in the wizardry of the electronics results in the brain switching itself off. Gradually people become unable to add up figures or write a letter without the help of a computer. Thinking seems to be no longer necessary as long as you have fingers to punch a keyboard.

HORSES IN RETIREMENT



The quaint horse carriages carting the old beer barrels from the breweries to the hotels and restaurants are no more. The last 7 of the famous Hürlimann beer horses have now been put into well deserved retirement on a specialised farm in St Gallen where they will be allowed to finish their lives in a quiet and tranquil setting, far away from the hustle and bustle of Zurich.

Will the horses miss their city life and the attention they used to get from passers-by and tourists? Nobody has

bothered to ask the horses' views on this matter.

From the day the Hürlimann firm was created, it had used horses for its beer deliveries and during its heydays, Hürlimann "employed" up to 78 horses in Zurich alone.

Over the past few years, the horses were no longer used for distributing beer, but only to pull a Hürlimann cart around the city streets as an advertising and promotional stunt. Banned from the main city streets, the horses could only be walked in the side streets, but as these streets also became increasingly clogged with cars, the Hürlimann horse carts too became more and more a traffic hindrance to other road users which was contrary to the aim of creating good will amongst the motorists towards the Hürlimann brand name.

So eventually the horses had to go and another chapter of the past has gone forever.

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