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Editorial

Prominent Images of Switzerland...

School holidays are occasions to host Grandchildren in our house. We regard this as a privilege and as they grow up we enjoy passing on some of our Swiss peculiarities in various aspects of daily life.

One thing we have to make sure of is to have our cuckoo clock in operation and as a special thrill we usually find ourselves turning the hour-hand to make the cuckoo appear in fast succession.

What a perfect image of Switzerland is your cuckoo clock remarked one of our visitors recently. -

But, did you know that this is only

partly so? The truth is that the real home of the cuckoo clock is the Black-Forest in Germany and has been so since the early 19th century.



Reality is that most of the cuckoo clocks sold in Switzerland aren't Swiss...! They can be from Japan, China or South Korea. Many are plastic and have quartz movements. - But apparently there is one and only one genuine Swiss cuckoo clock producer, the *Lötscher Company* near Zürich. The subtleties

are explained as follows: The original cuckoo clock is either from the Black-Forest or from Brienz in Central Switzerland. The difference is that in the Black-Forest you have the 'hunting types' and the 'bird types' but the Swiss ones are the 'chalet types'. So if ever you want to have a genuine Swiss cuckoo clock you will have to obtain a **Swiss chalet-type**. Research has shown that there is written documentation in Switzerland and in Germany that the Cuckoo clock actually originated in Middle-Europe. The much respected dictionary of horology apparently states simply that they were produced as early as the 15th century in the German City of Nürnberg. -

But lets go back to the real Swiss chalet-type cuckoo clock that is available in some tourist shops in Switzerland.

A recent documentary heard on Swiss Radio International informed the listeners that the *Lötscher Company* has 2 factories in Switzerland, one in Brienz where the 'chalet' for the cuckoo clock is carved in wood and the other in Zürich where the metal parts, the movement, manufactured in Germany, is added. Swiss industry does no longer produce those movements. - That could lead us back to the debate; is the chalet-type of cuckoo clock genuinely Swiss with the foreign movement in a Swiss chalet? And just as this is a complicated question so is the manufacture of the cuckoo clock itself. Apparently it is the wooden part combined with the metal part which makes it so. The more sophisticated Lötscher cuckoo clocks contain a minimum of 146 pieces and come complete with dancing figurines, dogs, the cuckoo (of course) and a fine Swiss music movement. The Swiss Company Lötscher claims to have been the first to introduce 'fine cuckoo clocks with music' in 1956.

The best-seller according to a Company-spokesman is the most loved-one by the tourists, model Nr. 570, produced since 1921, with the looks of a real chalet plucked out of the centre of the village of Brienz in Switzerland.

- One day I will have to admit to our Grandchildren that our cuckoo clock which we bought many years ago right here in New Zealand is not Swiss, but from 'the other side of the

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border'. Never mind, it will be the cuckoo that remains the fascination and moreover cuckoos are known to fly in all directions and across many a border.

President's Message

In last month's *Helvetia* I wrote about the high interest the Swiss Government holds regarding its citizens abroad, and the role Swiss Clubs hold within their communities.

In 1995, a Working Committee, titled "Swiss Clubs", was established by the Council for Swiss Abroad. The role of this group was to research the make-up, functions and goals of clubs worldwide, in order to know how best to offer the necessary aid and support required by these organisations, as well as to how to form new clubs where there are currently none.

This was done by sending questionnaires to Swiss Clubs throughout the world, of which just half were returned. Through answers received, it was discovered that this action was long overdue, and concluded that many of the existing Clubs were in need of a variety of levels of guidance and assistance.

The information received was collated and presented in a report on the finding of Swiss clubs worldwide, divided into four categories:

1. Statistics
2. Problems within the Clubs
3. Ideas and Recommendations
4. Clubs into the Future

I have translated and summarised this important document, and will begin this month with the first category.

1. Statistics

Overall individual Club membership varies from between 20 - 600, over 75% being Swiss Nationals. Many Clubs are "ageing" - average age is increasing, many Clubs having the majority of members over 60. Most Club Committees are made up of at least half being Swiss citizens, aged along the lines of their Clubs. The average term of service is 1-4 years. In most places, individual regional clubs are formed. Normally, a small membership fee is collected and then the cost of functions is often low or subsidised for members.

Only a small number of Clubs, mainly those with high membership or a large urban base, own high assets, both wealth and property.

The majority of Clubs organise 5-10 functions annually, and most of the rest offer regular monthly events. Communication to advertise functions is normally made through official publications or newsletters, by invitation, or by word of mouth. Most Clubs or Swiss organisations produce a variety of regular publications of many sorts. This work is normally done within a relatively small budget.

New members are often found through contact with Embassies or Consulates, but recent restructures and reductions of these diplomatic posts means that Clubs must begin finding new and innovative methods to locate new arrivals to invite them to join their local club.

So - food for thought. Where do we fit within these statistics, both as a Society and as individual Clubs?

Next month - a look at further categories researched, beginning with the Problems clubs face. In the meantime though, I wish an enjoyable March. Regards.....Beatrice PS. My thanks to the Auckland Club for the get well card following my recent further surgery. I appreciated your kind thoughts and good wishes.

SWISS BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Over the past few months, many responses have been received from members for inclusion in our proposed Society business directory.

But we still want more !!

So, if you own, run, or work for any business, anywhere throughout New Zealand, providing goods or services, which could then be supported by the Swiss Community or Tourists, then don't miss out - please let us know immediately!

For a small fee, we will advertise basic details of your business in a directory, which can then be used by residents and tourists to locate "Swiss" businesses throughout the country. If enough responses are received, the directory will be prepared within the coming months.

To be included, write to:

Directory
Beatrice Leuenberger
44 Montgomery Crescent
Hamilton.
or fax 07 843 7941.

Let us know about your business, and then we can tell everyone about you !!

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Your Corner.....

We are grateful to Heidi Wehrli of Matamata for her gallant efforts in composing 'a Society Member's Profile" on her Father Joseph (Sepp) Arnold of Hamilton.

A very prominent and long-standing member of the Hamilton Swiss Club, Sepp Arnold is of course the husband of Alice and the Father of a great family including Son Peter, 'Oberjodler' of the Swiss Kiwi Jodel Group of Auckland.

Thank you Sepp for allowing us a glimpse back into your life.

Doris and Trudy.