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EDITORIAL

ANNIVERSARIES - days to remember, including HOMESICKNESS and such like.....

Just as the artist steps back from his work or creation to review his handiwork, so it seems all of us have the need or desire to step back every now and again to appraise and to celebrate annually recurring days of significance - days that are worth a remembrance.

Numerous are the jokes about the husband getting 'into trouble' as he forgets the Wedding Anniversary in busy daily life, and is then chastised in no uncertain terms by his wife.

Lucky is the man celebrating his Wedding on August the second, I said to myself forty years ago in 1960, as 'our big day' had been arranged for the day following our National Day in Switzerland (a day that nobody forgets in any case).

Yes, and as you have guessed it by

now, my 'better half' and I have recently been celebrating 40 years of togetherness in 'bad days and in good days, in sickness and in health'. They call it the 'Ruby Wedding Anniversary' and for most of us reaching this milestone, it happens during advancing years of age!

For my wife and myself, it coincides with reaching the significant 65th birthday. Having kept contact with some of our Swiss school friends in 'the old country' throughout the years, we have been made aware for some time of the plan to re-unite with a Class reunion celebration at reaching the entitlement to call ourselves pensioners...!

I don't know about you, but the necessary preparations for another trip 'home' seem to re-activate a host of nostalgic and quite emotional memories that have been rather dormant in my subconscious mind. Trying to analyse one's feelings of the past can be a fascinating undertaking for

anybody I venture to think. Why all these mixed up feelings of expectations during the time of travel preparations, I asked myself?

Do I subconsciously grieve the thoughts that 'it's never going to be the same' as we left it, that old country of ours, when returning once again this time? How foolish, I say to myself. I should know by now that change is inevitable and have I not heard and read about all the 'wonderful' advances in living standards and technology in my country of origin, Switzerland?

Why can I once again feel the scars left behind by homesickness in my emotional 'memory-box' 40 years ago? Why should some of us have had to suffer so much homesickness anyway during the first few years of life in this desirable country of adoption, New Zealand?

Have you asked yourself such questions? How many Swiss immigrants of earlier years have carried scars of homesickness with themselves to their graves? Why should people emigrating and escaping relative harsh living conditions suffer homesickness once they live an easier life in 'the country of their choice'?

Has anyone ever taken a survey among immigrants (Swiss or otherwise) to find reasons for people with or without homesickness?

- Have you, the 'long-established Swiss-Kiwi' ever recorded on paper or in your mind the things you most missed 'from home' in the early days, or were such thoughts trivial??
- Well, I for myself, to this day, don't know if it is a sign of 'patriotic love of homeland' or a sign of weak emotional character that I suffered greatly under homesickness for the first three years as a single man in New Zealand. A list of mitigating factors explaining my homesickness is firmly set in my mind.

As a twenty year-old, I left behind numerous relatives and friends (of both genders), made during primary and secondary school years; during years of professional training; military service, the church choir; gymnastic-circle; shooting-club; as well as several neighbouring families that had been part of my life up to the "time of maturity" which was twenty-one in those days...!

Living in New Zealand and working as a 'dairy farm worker by necessity', where was I to find the friendly attachment of camaraderie I was used to in a Swiss gymnastic club?

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