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President's Message

Once again, the Foundation for Swiss Youth Abroad is offering a variety of Summer camps, giving some younger Swiss the opportunity to spend some time in Switzerland. The seven camps are spread around the whole country, including all four language regions.

Wouldn't it be wonderful for a 12 - 16 year old from New Zealand to spend two weeks travelling all around Switzerland using 20 different forms of transport - including train, steam ship, tram, canoe and even a scooter ?! This trip takes place from 25th June to 7th July.

Further camps for the summer are:

- 7/7 - 21/7 - Trogen, AR age 7 - 12
- Torgon, VS 10 - 14
- 21/7 - 4/8 - Melchtal, OW 7 - 12
- La Punt, GR 10 - 14
- 6/8 17/8 - Mariastein, SO 7 - 12
- St Stephan, BE 10 - 14
- 11/8 25/8 - Caprino, TI 8 - 14

Each camp takes 30 - 35 children.

The main goal is for Swiss youngsters abroad to be able to visit and get to know their "home country". Activities include a variety of modes of travel and visiting many places of interest; meeting same aged youngsters from around the world; sport and games; arts and crafts.

The children also have a perfect opportunity to learn about life in Switzerland; 'Swiss' languages, and culture, and traditional Swiss songs, games, foods and even recipes.

Camp costs to be paid by parents are around Sfr.700 - 1,000, as well as travel expenses to Switzerland. The Foundation would like as many Swiss children abroad as possible to have the opportunity to attend one of the camps. In some special cases - especially where the children are resident in more distant countries - the Foundation may be able to help with travel costs. Further information and application form are available from me, or can be viewed on the internet site www.aso.ch.

It would be great to see a youngster from New Zealand take part in one of these camps - who will be the first?

It is now nearly four years since Hamilton Club took over the responsibility of running the Society and producing the *Helvetia* magazine.

And very soon, we will all once again be coming together for the next AGM, which will take place in Hamilton at Queen's Birthday weekend. I am looking forward to catching with many of our members from the Clubs and around the country - and if I could welcome any members from the South Island, it would be real be a highlight !

For further information about the weekend refer to the separate AGM article on this page. Finalised details will be published next month, together with the Agenda and Minutes. Remember, if anyone would like to forward a remit or motion, these must be received in writing and be published in the May issue, so should reach me by 15th April to be included.

Thank you to the children who participated in the 'Holiday Memories' activity, which were all very well done. Hopefully, the response will be more encouraging next time.

Have a nice Easter and enjoyable autumn, kind regards to you all.

Beatrice.



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Society Annual General Meeting

**Saturday, 2nd June
and Sunday, 3rd June**
(Queen's Birthday Weekend)

The Swiss Society AGM will this year be hosted by the Hamilton Club.

On Saturday, 2nd June, all visitors are invited to join us for our third card evening, to be held at the Events Centre, Tirau. This will include a 'generous' and delicious supper, as well as a good range of prizes for the top scorers of the evening. (Cost per person \$12).

Sunday morning will commence at Swisscraft, Frankton, for the grand final of the interclub sport's competitions - to decide who will take home the cowbell for the coming year. This will be followed by lunch, and then the annual general meeting.

A function on Sunday evening will include dinner, entertainment and dancing. The Swiss-Kiwi Yodel Group will be performing for us, and then we can dance the night away to the "Sounds of Switzerland". Tombola tickets will be on sale, with a variety of great prizes to be won, so please bring plenty of spending money !!

Please note that accommodation is the responsibility of individual clubs and members, but if anyone has any queries or would like any assistance, please contact a committee member of the Hamilton Club (see pg 2). There are several events being held in the city on the same weekend, so it would be advisable to book as soon as possible.

Some details are yet to be finalised, and venues for the AGM and evening function, as well as the cost for the Sunday evening, will be advised in next month's *Helvetia*.

The Hamilton Club looks forward to greeting visitors from the other clubs for this weekend, and hopes to see many Society members from around the country.

BL