

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 69 (2003)
Heft: [2]

Rubrik: President's report

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 05.12.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

President's Report

One month of 2003 already gone!!! It seems that every year goes quicker ... I must be getting old!!! Finally summer has arrived, and now the farmers are wanting rain again ... and quite badly in some areas!!! The weather can never be right for these professionals ... it seems that they're a hard bunch to keep happy when weather is the topic!!!

Several weeks ago I had the pleasure of meeting one of the founding committee members of the Taranaki Swiss Club, Heinz Helbling. The first AGM was held on 29 March 1952 at the Mangatoki Hall and he, being one of the younger people there, was voted onto the committee. I have outlined a few details about Heinz and his time in New Zealand which may interest some of our readers. He has written a book entitled "Als Kaser in Neuseeland" - (As cheese maker in New Zealand). Should anyone be interested in purchasing one of these books, written in German, please call me.

Heinz was born into a farming family in Epsach (Bernischen Seeland), and decided to become a cheese maker. He did all the various schools associated with cheese making, and then came time to decide "where to from here?" It was difficult to take over a cheese factory (too many qualified cheese makers applying for the few jobs), so it was either changing professions or emigrating. With his friend Peter Gutmann, also a cheese maker, they decided to emigrate ... where to??? ... the USA, Australia, Canada, South Africa, South America or New Zealand. They decided that each of them must write the name of a country on a piece of paper. They would then confer as to what

they had written down and from there they would make up their minds where to go. Both wrote down New Zealand ... they had heard it was a nice country, lovely people and that NZ was a big exporter of butter and milk powder. They had the address of Werner Gut who had advised them that he would guarantee them a job, which pacified their parents. The journey by boat took forty days, and during this time they met Arthur Kuriger who already lived in New Zealand as a dairy farmer. He took them down to Taranaki, where they then met Werner. He told them to go to the general manager of the Kaponga Dairy Company, and they duly carefully took all their cheese making certificates for him to view. He didn't even look at them!!! He just said "You can both start at the Riverlea Dairy Factory tomorrow!!!" The manager of the Riverlea Dairy Factory gave them one of the factory houses to live in ... a house just for them!!! They couldn't believe it!!! They decided to call their house "Villa Switzerland". Neither of them could cook, so Peter wrote home and asked them to send him a recipe book.

They were then kitted out in whites ... something that wasn't compulsory in Switzerland at the time ... and they were ready to start work the next day!!! Manufacturing of cheddar was totally different to a "Schweizerkaserei", so he had to learn all over again!!! There was no cheese making apprenticeship in those days, as there was in Switzerland. Language was a bit of a problem with the quickly spoken "New Zealand English"!!! Often the men would say "You are doing well, Swiss boy-!!! Meeting Peter in the storeroom one day, he said to Heinz

"Do you realise we are foreign workers now!!!"

Upon leaving Switzerland, Heinz's father had said "foreign country, foreign people, foreign language, foreign cheese..."

The Riverlea Cheese Factory had thirty-five farmers bringing approximately 30 - 35,000 kg milk daily, and all was manufactured into cheddar cheese. In those days, cheddar was nearly the only cheese manufactured, and about 95% was exported to England and the USA. The other workers shook their heads in disbelief when they told them how many different cheeses were made in Swiss cheese making factories!!!

In March 1954, Heinz decided to return to Switzerland for personal reasons, and worked as a dairy industry inspector. He has, however, returned to New Zealand a few times to visit the country and catch up with friends.

It was very interesting talking to Heinz, and listening to some of the experiences he had during his time in New Zealand. We would be most happy to receive any such stories for publication from you, as I am sure it would interest some of our other readers. Thank you, Heinz, for your time. I look forward to hearing from some of you, and would love to print further stories.

Regards
Marianne



Dolphin Travel

"SWISS Professionalism with a KIWI Smile"

*Ihr Schweizer
Neuseeland-Spezialist*

Planung und Buchung der Neuseeland
Arrangements Ihrer Freunde und Bekannten
nach Schweizer Qualitätsmassstaben?

Kontaktieren Sie Dolphin Travel, Ihr Spezialist für individuelle
Reisen, Fly/Drives, Gruppen und Spezialreisen in Neuseeland!

Dolphin Travel (Alex Beck, Daniel Brandl & Team)
PO Box 47 610, Ponsonby, Auckland, New Zealand
Tel (+64 9) 376 6611/Fax (+64 9) 376 6616
Email: inbound@dolphin-travel.co.nz
Internet: <http://www.dolphin-travel.co.nz>

Member NZTIA



**NEW HORIZON
COLLEGE OF ENGLISH**

Owned and Operated by New Horizon College Limited

Saletti zame!!

**English Language
in Napier**

Do you have friends or relations in
Switzerland who would like to learn
ENGLISH in the 'Art Deco Capital of the
World', Napier, New Zealand?

Contact me at
New Horizon College of English
for details about our courses

Christine Schmidli

Phone: 06 835 6423

06-TEL-NHCE

Fax: 06 835 6523

Email: english.newhorizon@clear.net.nz

www.nhce.ac.nz

*Very competitive rates.
Excellent quality programmes.
Wonderful modern campus.*