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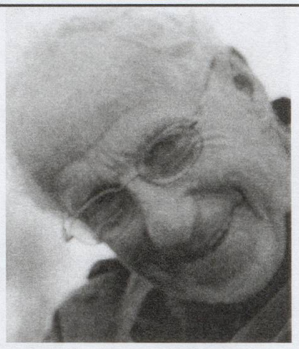

Bernard Leo Leuthard

Bernard Leo Leuthard, the son of Swiss immigrants John and Anne Leuthard, was born on 4th October 1933, in Eltham, Taranaki. He grew up on the family farm, together with four older brothers and two younger sisters.

Following his secondary schooling in Auckland, he returned to Eltham to work on the family farm, before taking up sharemilking.

In 1960, Bernard met Colleen in New Plymouth, and a year later the couple were married at St. Martin's Catholic Church at Pungarehu, Taranaki. Their son, Paul, was born in 1963, followed by a daughter, Fiona, in 1967.

In 1969, the family moved to the Waikato. They spent four years on their first farm at Tauhei, before moving to their current farm at Rukuhia, just out of Hamilton.

Bernard called himself a member of the "F Club" - Family, Friends, Faith and Farming were all important facets of his life. The addition of seven grandchildren to the family brought him great joy, and his strong catholic faith guided him through life. He was an active member of the South Hamilton Lions Club and belonged to Federated Farmers, and the Town Milk Board, where he was proud to be Hamilton Town Milk Supplier number zero. Prior to the move to the Waikato, Bernard and Colleen attended Taranaki Swiss Club functions, and this involvement was revived in recent years with the Hamilton Club. Bernard was especially proud of his Swiss heritage, and very much enjoyed attending functions. A highlight was an overseas trip 1996, where they spent three very memorable weeks in Switzerland.

Bernard's health deteriorated during this last year, and his final wish - to die peacefully at home on the farm with his family - was granted on 4th August 2007.

At the funeral service, Bernard's coffin, draped with the Swiss Flag, was carried into Saint Pius X Catholic Church to the sound of a yodel by Peter Arnold (which Bernard had arranged only the week earlier), and his brother, Father Lou Leuthard, conducted the Requiem Mass. A small group from the Hamilton Club sang the Swiss National Anthem at the interment at the Te Awamutu Cemetery.

The Hamilton Swiss Club extends its deepest sympathy to the Leuthard Family. May he rest in Peace.

Gotthard tunnel celebrates 125 years

The opening of the Gotthard tunnel 125 years ago not only showed the world the knowhow of Swiss engineers, but also permanently shaped the history and identity of Switzerland. Local politicians north and south of the tunnel emphasize the importance of the 15 km-long tunnel, calling for it to be preserved after the opening of the new Gotthard base tunnel, foreseen in 2018. However, the maintenance of this line costs the Swiss Federal Railways about SFr 50 million a year; why should such a sum be invested in the future after the completion of the Gotthard base tunnel? The cantons Uri and Ticino would like it to be saved as a tourist attraction and would like it to be recognized as a Unesco cultural heritage site. More than 2'500 men were working at times on the tunnel. The conditions were so bad that they eventually downed tools in 1875. Several deaths were reported when police and a vigilante group of volunteers used force to end the strike. According to official sources 170 men lost their lives constructing the tunnel, although modern research puts the figure at closer to 200.

With a length of 57 km, the new rail tunnel, part of the New Rail Links through the Alps project, will be the longest of its kind in the world. *from swissinfo*

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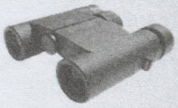

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