

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 74 (2008)
Heft: [6]

Rubrik: [Impressum]

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Well, after the trip to Auckland I was off to my overseas trip, and now I am back. I had a wonderful time, and the trip there and back wasn't too bad either. I met old friends, and we went on great walks. Some of them I don't trust, though – so maybe not all are really my friends, but I respect them for their venerable age. –

I guess by now you might have become a bit suspicious about my overseas destination, and you are right: I did have an 'overseas' trip, but it only took half an hour by bus, half an hour by train and half an hour by boat to get there. I spent one week on Mana Island, south of the better known Kapiti Island. Looking from the mainland, Mana seems to have very steep sides and a bare, flat top. Once you are on the island, you find that not all sides are as steep and forbidding as they look, nor is the top quite as flat as you thought; not only on islands do things tend to be quite different from what they look. Some areas are still bare, but a lot of the island is covered by regenerating bush. Ever since the island was taken over by the Department of Conservation, in 1987, trees have been planted by DoC staff and volunteers – a bunch of great people, some highly individualistic, which is a nice way of saying a bit crazy, but all very dedicated and idealistic.



The friends I do not trust over there are the pukeko and the takahe. They obviously resent the planting and try hard to pull the freshly planted trees out again; they do not eat them, they just pull them out to re-establish their habitat, grassland. The pukeko are not numbered, nor banded or counted, but the takahe are counted and monitored and banded and cherished, and any 'spare' ones are taken off the island to establish takahe populations on other islands or to resettle them in remote areas on the mainland. Who said that all birds are equal?

I might go on another 'overseas' trip a bit later in the year; it would be my third one in 2008! *Trudi*

I ha ja Glück gha u ha dörfe s sunnige Wätter vo Auckland gniessie über das Wuchenänd vo üsere Generauversammlig. Natürlich, d Sunnecreme hani vergässe iizpacke, i ha nümme gwüssst, dass Auckland so schön cha si !!!

I would like to congratulate the Auckland Swiss Club for winning the cowbell competition against the team from Taranaki. It seems fitting that this beautiful cowbell will be hanging in the Auckland clubhouse, in memory of the person who donated it to the Swiss Society, Arthur Müller – at least for this year.

I have really enjoyed the meeting of the Swiss Society and have watched in amazement how well organised it all was. Congratulations to Marcel Rüedi and his team for all their efforts. It was very much appreciated by all of the participants.

A special big thank you to Marianne Drummond and her team who looked after me, offering transport and even a bed for the night, without prior notice. Thank you, Remigi and

Erna Zimmermann, who gave up their romantic weekend. After driving from Wellington to Auckland, it was very much appreciated. I found Auckland's traffic fast, and the highway turn-offs came around too quickly. Next time I come to Auckland I think I will use a GPS!

After listening to various conversations about making the tastiest and most cost effective fondue, I decided to drop in at the Mercer cheese factory. I didn't actually 'see' a cheese factory as such; it was a shop with a very helpful Dutch lady at the helm. It was stocked with many cheese varieties. I heard that a busload of Swiss people from Taranaki had just left before my arrival. After trying the cheeses and with 15 years of making fondue for the Wellington Swiss Club, I have come to the conclusion, that there are still many secrets in the art of making fondue. I will have to consult with our connoisseur, Max Fuhrer.

Uf Wiederluege
Roland

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