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Ah, isn't it great that the days are getting longer again, and there is more warmth in the sun!

I'd like to welcome back home all those New Zealand Swiss who escaped some of this NZ winter and renewed their ties with Switzerland. I hope you had a good time with family and friends and enjoyed speaking Swiss all day long - and I hope you looked forward to coming back home to New Zealand. Aren't we fortunate to have two countries we call home?

When it was especially grim and cold, a few weeks ago, I went on holiday, too. I went to Italy. Florence was my first destination, with the Ponte Vecchio, the many beautiful piazze and churches. My hotel was close to the market, and in the mornings you could hear the carts bringing fresh produce to the market. I was very impressed by the painter Fra Angelico who had decorated the walls of all cells in the monastery San Marco with paintings of Saints or scenes from the Bible - even the ones that had no windows. He had to work by candlelight and knew that the monks would not have candles and would not see his paintings - but he did it anyway. One day I visited Siena - definitely the highlight of my holiday, with the beautiful Piazza del Campo and the mosaic of roofs, and the narrow lanes, the balconies, the rows of windows, a symphony of colours. - Then I went to Rome and visited the ruins from Roman times, and the Vatican with its treasures; it is the richest museum I have ever seen. After so much culture I sat in the shade and sipped hot, strong coffee, and I licked I don't know how many gelati. And of course I had more than one pizza - and what pizza, rich and juicy, crisp and delicious - and the wine that went with it.. - Napoli was next, bubbling, lively, not always entirely safe in the old quarter, but the Mafia didn't kidnap me. I saw the Vesuvio with a little smoke, just to indicate it wasn't dead yet. On day excursions I visited

Pompeii and Herculaneum and the splendid Greek temples of Paeste, 2500 years old and majestic, in long grass, and the cicadas were deafening. I wasn't the only tourist there, but I always managed to find a quiet niche, and I still remember the lizards lying in the sun. It was a wonderful holiday.

Well, you are right: I never left New Zealand this winter. I went on my holiday in my photo album. Over forty years ago, when I still lived in Switzerland, I went on a trip to Italy once and saw what I just told you. And after the holiday I wrote down what I had seen, and I added a few postcards and made it into a "Foto-

album", and it is in this photo album where I went on holiday this winter. With the help of the postcards - I didn't have a camera then - and my notes it all came back to me.

So my advice: If you went somewhere special, don't just store your photos in a box or have them in the computer; make a photo album and add your notes, what you saw, heard, smelled, thought, so you can relive your holiday any time in the future, even in forty years' time, at home, close to the fire in winter or out in the garden in summer, on your own, or share it with friends!

TnD

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