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# HELVETIA

Magazine for the members of the Swiss Society of New Zealand Inc  
Helvetia is in its 77th year

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## Canton of St. Gallen

St. Gallen is in the north east of Switzerland. The two half cantons Appenzell Innerrhoden and Appenzell Ausserrhoden are completely surrounded by the canton of St. Gallen.

The lands of the canton St. Gallen represent acquisitions of the abbey of St. Gallen over centuries. The founding of St. Gallen is based on the Irish monk Gallus (ca 550-620 or 640), who built a



Rapperswil

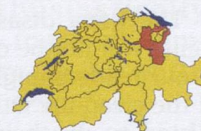
St. Gallen covers an area of just over 2,000 km<sup>2</sup>, and has a population of almost 500,000. About 20% of the total population are foreigners.

About one third of the canton is wooded, while nearly half is used for farming. Almost 300 km<sup>2</sup> of the farm land is alpine pastures.

The mountains of the canton include part of a thrust fault that was declared a geologic UNESCO World Heritage Site, under the name Swiss Tectonic Arena Sardona, in 2008.

hermitage at the river Steinach in 612. Around 720, one hundred years after Gallus's death, the Alemannian priest Othmar built an abbey and gave it the name Abbey of St. Gallen.

In 926 Hungarian raiders attacked the abbey and the surrounding town. About 1205 the abbot became a prince of the church in the Holy Roman Empire. In 1311 St. Gallen became a Free Imperial City. By about 1353 the guilds, headed by the clothweavers guild, gained control of the civic government.



In 1405 the Appenzell estates of the abbot successfully rebelled and in 1411 they became allies of the Old Swiss Confederation. A few months later the citizens of St. Gallen also became allies.

In 1526 the mayor and humanist Joachim von Watt (Vadian) introduced the reformation in the city of St. Gallen. The town converted to the new reformed religion while the abbey remained Roman Catholic.

Agricultural activity consists predominantly of dairy farming and cattle breeding in the mountainous areas. In the plains fruit and wine production are important, but there is also mixed farming.

Industries of the canton include optical goods, pyrotechnics, chemicals and pharmaceuticals. Tourism plays an important role in the many resorts. There is a thermal spa in Bad Ragaz and another in St. Margrethen and a great number of winter sports facilities.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Editorial/The response of NZ political parties	2
Carolyn Lane	3
St. Gallen	4-7
Stone is star of Swiss festival/ Pedal to the metal	8
Children's page	
Swiss Club News	10-15
Swiss News	16, 17
Obituary/Strong Swiss Women	18, 19
Chamois - Gemse	20