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Birthday Celebrations and Cookie Decorating

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



Margrit Suter (nee Schwyter) turns 90 years old on 22nd November 2012.

At sixteen years of age, Margrit Schwyter arrived in New Zealand from Zürich Switzerland, together with her parents and her sister. In 1938, Europe was preparing for war, and Margrit's uncle in New Zealand paid for the family to make this life-changing journey. Leaving England in the summer, they had beautiful weather until they got to the Southern Ocean. As they approached Wellington, they encountered wild stormy weather. After six weeks on the water, the family had finally arrived to start their new life in New Zealand.

Margrit's uncle, Jacob Schumacher, farmed on Monmoth Road in the Taranaki area of the North Island, and this is where the new arrivals made their home. There were many new things to learn for this young city girl. Helping to machine milk 35 cows took 3 adults over 3 hours! Uncle Jacob didn't really trust these "new machines", so he strip started all the animals then stripped them at the end of milking.

Margrit met and married Franz Suter, who was also Swiss, in 1942 and during their 46 years of marriage they farmed in Taranaki, increasing their herd and family at regular intervals. They were blessed with 12 children, some of which are still farming in Taranaki.

Margrit had learned to play the button accordion whilst still in Switzerland, so our home was always filled with Swiss music long before the arrival of tapes and CDs. Both Margrit and Franz were ardent card players, and enjoyed many happy hours with the Taranaki Swiss club, including many a 1st of August celebration! Margrit enjoys all things Swiss: Music, cards, Kirsch and most of all - her homeland.

There were many challenges to overcome. This she appeared to do with ease, although there must have been hard times as well, especially in raising us 12 children. Margrit still lives in Eltham, under Mount Taranaki. She came to love the mountain, and has chosen to stay in the area for her entire life. On reaching the remarkable milestone of 90 years of age, we, the twelve children, wish our wonderful Mutti a very Happy Birthday, and hope she enjoys a very special day with extended family.

By Theresa Halford nee Suter

Cookie decorating

Cookie decorating dates back to at least the 14th century when in Switzerland, "Springerle" cookie moulds were carved from wood and used to impress Biblical designs into cookies. The oldest known Springerle mould is housed at the Swiss National Museum in Zürich, Switzerland. This round-shaped mould was carved from wood in the 14th century and pictures the Easter Lamb.

A Springerle mould or press (carved rolling pins) is used to imprint a picture or design on to a cookie. These cookies have been the traditional Christmas cookies in Switzerland, Bavaria and Austria for centuries. To add to the decorative effect, the designs may be coloured with food colouring, or when used for decorative purposes only, with tempera or acrylic paints.

Springerle cookies originally displayed biblical scenes and were used to teach the illiterate about the Bible. Eventually, the cookies were decorated with secular scenes depicting images of life events, such as marriages and births.

Food historians also trace the artistic element of cookie making back to Medieval Germany where Lebkuchen (gingerbread) was crafted into fancy shapes and decorated with sugar. However, the Lebkuchen Guilds only permitted professional gingerbread bakers to make this, with the exceptions of Christmas and Easter when anyone was free to make their own.

Sources: www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cookie_decorating, www.springerle.com



Springerle "Three Angels" Cookie Mould
www.springerle.ch - Catalogue

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