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From the Editor

Dear Helvetia Readers:

80 years of Helvetia! We are delighted to be able to celebrate this occasion with a special birthday issue that travels down memory lane, and explores where it all started and how it changed over time. It has been fascinating to see this material emerge from libraries near and far.

The Helvetia was originally created by the Swiss Benevolent Society to foster the closer contact between Swiss in New Zealand and to share Swiss news. Its key aim was its benevolent character: This was thought to be particularly appealing to the Swiss people. It was a noble cause and says much about the values held by Swiss in New Zealand and 184 other global Swiss Benevolent Societies at that time.

The Helvetia preceded the formation of the Swiss clubs around the country by some 20 years. We understand that the Hamilton club was then responsible for the Helvetia for many years, before the current five year roster between the main four New Zealand clubs started.

Maintaining a publication for 80 years is an amazing achievement. It is also a tribute to the clubs and the many individuals who have been creatively and tirelessly involved in the Helvetia's production over the years. Although the people involved have changed, the Helvetia has stayed as the central means of communication for our society. In this way, the benevolent aim of our Society has not changed at all - proving that great values last the distance.

This birthday issue would not have come together without the amazing effort of our President Tanja Latham-Zurbruegg who has been quietly working away for months, David Latham, our publishing man, and this time also Nadine Martinez-Stanley, who created the stunning front page, as well as a number of other people whose support was invaluable. Many thanks!!!!

But let's not forget the upcoming festive season either! It's a time that has a habit of being wonderful and challenging in equal measure. I hope you will find the right balance for yourself, family and friends and wish you peaceful times and good health for the season and the coming year.

Sue

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