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YEAR 80

Highlights

- Glarus Alps
- Ambassador's farewell
- Swiss-Kiwi stories: Peter and Cora Vogel
- Swiss Club adventures

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Glarus Alps: More than meets the eye

Once again, we head to the heights of Switzerland, the Glarus Alps. Situated in the eastern Swiss Alps, the Glarus Alps encompass the mountains where the cantons of Glarus, Grisons, St Gallen and Uri meet. Water bounds the area on all sides, the Walensee (Lake Walen) in the north, the upper Rhine River in the east and south, and the River Reuss in the west.

An amazing alpine panorama presents itself into all directions, after all, there are no less than 51 peaks exceeding 3000 metres! The Tödi mountain tops these at a height of 3614 metres.

On closer inspection, the Glarus Alps offer much more than their natural awesomeness. The Glarus thrust is testimony to an ancient collision between the African and European tectonic plates. Over millions of years, ancient rock layers were thrust on top of each other for more than 35km, causing the Alps to tower up. The thrust is visible to the naked eye in a number of places, thus helping scientists to sort out the puzzle of how mountains are formed.

The Unesco World Heritage Site Swiss Tectonic Arena Sardona acknowledges both the important geological evidence and the history of scientific discovery in the area.

How do you get to this remote area? The Linth valley in the canton of Glarus provides access to the glaciated mountain tops of the Glarus Alps and their geological secrets. Its oldest visitor, the "Föhn", a warm mountain wind, ensures that despite towering mountains and snowy slopes, the valley enjoys a relatively mild climate. No wonder the "Glärnerland" is a tourist mecca, offering its visitors limitless alpine walking tracks, skiing, geological exploration, and a wealth of other summer and winter activities.

For those interested in exploring the geological wonders of the Glarus thrust, there are over 50 "GeoStätten" (geological sites) to visit, including mines, quarries, geological paths, Stone Age archaeological sites and research facilities. Keen walkers might want to attempt the Sardona Heritage path, leading through the centre of the arena.

Sources: <http://www.geopark.ch>, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glarus_Alps



Glarus Alps viewed from Braunwald in the Linth Valley, facing south-west

<http://www.hikr.org/gallery/photo6537856.html> (Photo: BraunW, CCBY-SA3.0)