

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 80 (2014)
Heft: [5]

Nachruf: Obituaries : Eric Nicolaus Meuli
Autor: [s.n.]

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Obituaries



Eric Nicolaus Meuli

22 January 1924 – 8 July 2014

Born in Eltham, Taranaki, Eric was the second child to Nicolaus and Rita Meuli. Eric's father Nic was born in Nufenen (GR), immigrating to New Zealand in 1911. Eric and his siblings Olga, Betty and Nina were raised in a farming environment. Eric moved to Ohangai at the age of seven and lived on Ohangai Road throughout his life. He was schooled locally both in Ohangai and Hawera.

Eric's life-long partner was Audrey (deceased) whom he married in 1955, and together, in Ohangai, they raised four daughters, Gillian, Pauline, Denise and Erica, who in turn produced nine grandchildren.

He became a member of the Taranaki Swiss Club, attending many events including the annual Swiss Picnic and card afternoons.

Eric got great joy from travelling, visiting Switzerland six times, the first in 1983, while his last visit was in 2009, at the age of 85. Eric and Audrey were always generous with their hospitality, hosting many visiting Swiss relations and visitors in Ohangai as well as exchanging Christmas and Birthday greetings on a regular basis.

The friendships he developed throughout his life, be it from his schooling, the Ohangai Community, as a relative, an international traveller or an employee were very important to Eric. He was a hardworking and very proud man and this helped shape him into the person who we remember today.

This article was written with love by Eric's daughters.

The Swiss Society and Clubs extend heartfelt sympathies to the families and friends concerned.



John Arthur Kuriger

8 December 1921 – 9 June 2014

John's parents were married in Einsiedeln, Switzerland and emigrated to Oaonui, Taranaki in 1920. They had eight children; John the eldest son was born and educated at Oaonui. He left school aged 13 and stayed at home to help on the farm. At 18 he was enlisted in the army during WW11. His youngest sister, who was 4 years of age at the time, said she remembers the tall, handsome big brother in military uniform coming home on the bus. In August 1942 John was posted to go overseas but tragically his father, John, died suddenly of a heart attack. John was released from the army to take on the responsibility of helping his mother, Rosa, run the farm and raise his siblings. They had a wonderful and happy life; there was love, tears and laughter.

In 1954 John married Bertha Kalin, the second eldest of nine children. John and Bertha farmed in partnership with John's brother, Lou. Then in 1970 they sold their share to Lou and bought a farm at Manaia. John and Bertha were blessed with five children, one son and four daughters, and ended up having sixteen grandchildren and nineteen great grandchildren. So John and Bertha were never lonely, as there was always family around.

John was a hard worker and really enjoyed farming. He was also a keen sportsman playing football when he was younger, then later he enjoyed golf. John and Bertha were loyal and dedicated members of the Taranaki Swiss Club and enjoyed attending many of our functions and bus trips away. They were also hard-working committee members for many years, and we are very appreciative of their valuable and generous contribution to our club. In his youth John competed in the 'steinstossen' and had his name engraved on the trophy several times, and later they both enjoyed a good game of euchre at our card afternoons.

Thirty years ago John and Bertha retired to Hawera where they shared many happy times with their friends. However for John the last three years were spent at Trinity Home and Hospital suffering from Parkinsons. There he was always being visited by family and members of the Taranaki Swiss Club. Then on the 9th of June he passed to his eternal rest. His funeral was at St Joseph's in Hawera. Thank you very much to Othmar for organising a wonderful farewell with members of the Swiss Club forming a guard of honour and alphorn and accordion music at the grave side. Now we just have good memories of a kind and loved husband and father.



Heidi Black

19 March 1939 – 15 May 2014

Heidi was born in Switzerland on 19 March 1939. Her upbringing was countryside village life in the region of Basel, living the seasons and having a strong connection to the land. Her early working life included modelling in Paris and secretarial work in Zurich.

In 1968, while Heidi was working as a private secretary to an executive of the Steel Company of Canada in Hamilton, Ontario, she met Peter Black, a scientist working for the then-new New Zealand Steel. They married in Auckland and moved to Waiuku, and their first child, Helen, was born towards the end of 1969. After a short time of working in Australia and Napier, New Zealand, they settled in Meadowbank in 1972 and lived there until 1984. In 1973 they had a son, Stephen.

Heidi was a devoted mother and a true friend. Her connection with Switzerland remained very strong and she travelled back and forth between New Zealand and her place of birth on a number of occasions. She passionately upheld the traditional celebrations of all the major festivals like Easter, Christmas, and Carnival, and remained an avid follower