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Editorial Team Hamilton

continued from last issue

Hello Readers,

In the last issue we introduced some of the editorial team, here are the rest of our hard working team who multi-task and, like those introduced in the last issue, provide articles and/or photos, proofread, test recipes and help with the many tasks involved in bringing your Helvetia to you. They are an amazing bunch who come from all walks of life and it is a pleasure for me to work with them - editor



Belinda Cooper

I was born in Wellington to Josie and Bert Flühler and at 9 months old we spent 2 years in Switzerland so Schwyzerdütsch became my first language. After returning to New Zealand, Mum and Dad opened the "Swiss Chalet" restaurant and us kids (myself, Peter and Trudi) did our share of helping out. I completed all of my education in Hamilton, including a degree in Languages (French, German and English) and several diplomas in piano before going on my big OE and working in Zürich for a year. Upon my return, I trained as a Secondary teacher and married Paul, also a teacher. Over the next 10 years we lived in Wanganui, Hamilton, Auckland and Melbourne and our family grew to 5. We then moved to Peshawar, and later Bannu in the North-West-Frontier-Province of Pakistan where we served the Church of Pakistan in the field of education – rebuilding an old mission school in a remote area to provide education to children where literacy was 9% for boys and 3% for girls. The school grew from 25 to 500 students in the 7 years we were there and now it is a very well respected High School of 1000 students.

Since returning to New Zealand in 2002, we have stepped back into educational roles in Hamilton. Our children are all grown up and we now have 4 grandchildren. We are involved in the local Parish. I'm a passionate trapper and Bushcraft instructor for the Duke of Edinburgh's Hillary Award. In September 2016 I climbed my first major mountain, Mt Alalinhorn, 4025m in Switzerland. I hope to do more in the future. I enjoy the annual Swiss Club shooting, fondue evening and weekend tramping so it was an easy step to join the friendly Helvetia team.



Brigitte Hofer

I grew up amongst six siblings on a small, hilly farm in Zollbrück, a town in the beautiful Emmental. After school I completed the apprenticeship as a commercial clerk in a notary's office. In 2008 I flew to Auckland for an OE to learn English and to travel, not knowing that this country would later become my new home.

My future partner Jonathan, an old friend from back home, was working on a dairy farm in Cambridge at that time. When I visited him we fell in love, but soon after I had to go back to work. Jonathan came back to Switzerland too later that year, because of me, but, in the back of his mind, knowing that he would love to go back to New Zealand at some stage.

In 2011 before our big move I attended the "Bäuerinnenschule" (farmer's wife school) in Hondrich near Spiez. We found a job on a dairy farm in Otorohanga. It was a big change for me from working in an office to being a farm assistant, but I soon really enjoyed working in the outdoors and don't miss the office work.

In 2013 we moved to Matamata, where we found a 50/50 sharemilking job, with a long time member of Hamilton Swiss Club, Agnes Elisabeth Gamperle, and bought our own herd of 200 cows. I always enjoy rearing our calves in spring. For two years I've worked for LIC in Herd Testing, which was great to get to know the area and the local people.

We married in 2014 and have a one year old son Henry. Being a mum is definitely the best job ever.



Doris Rust

I was born in Hamilton, New Zealand. My parents, Joe and Helen Staheli immigrated to New Zealand in 1957 - if you read their Swiss-Kiwi Life Story I was one of the children in the playpen while Mum was sewing for their upholstery business.

I grew up in Hamilton, lived a few years in Waihi and then spent many years on a dairy farm out of Te Awamutu with my husband Peter, and 3 children - Kim, Philip and Daniel.

In 2009 we gave up dairy farming and became "townies", living in Ngatea and spending our free time at our beach house in Pauanui.

Earlier this year we sold our beach house and home in Ngatea and along with our 2 sons Philip and Daniel and his partner Jacqui have purchased a dairy farm at Wharepapa South, 20 minutes out of Te Awamutu. Peter and I are enjoying life back on the farm, working alongside our boys and passing on some of our farming knowledge.

We are fortunate to have a gorgeous grand-daughter Olive and another one due later this year.

Both Peter and I have been on the committee of the Hamilton Swiss Club and I was also part of the Editing Team last time Hamilton was responsible for the Helvetia. In recent years I was treasurer for a Motorcross Club where Peter actively competes.

At the moment a lot of my time is taken up with rearing calves, weed-spraying, keeping up with book-work and spending any spare time with Kim and Olive who live in Hunua.

Editorial Team Hamilton



Heidi Fransen

My parents, Margrit and Rinaldo Rust, married and immigrated to NZ in 1960. Dad started as a farm worker in Rukuhia. Ten years later, Mum and Dad went sharemilking on a farm in Te Kowhai, before winning a ballot farm in Arohena (40 kilometres south of Te Awamutu) in 1976.

Being the youngest of four children, I attended primary school in Te Kowhai and Arohena, and travelled daily on the bus to Te Awamutu College. At the end of sixth form, I left school and came to Hamilton where I worked in an accountant's office.

I married Paul Fransen in 1989 and the following year we spent 6 weeks in Holland and Switzerland visiting relatives in both countries. We also managed to attend the Oberammergau Passion Play in Germany at that time.

We have four daughters aged 23, 21, 18 and 14. I was an at-home mum until 2009 when I took on the sports co-ordinator role at the primary school where my girls attended, which I did for six years. Since then I have been working part time in the school office, and find that even though my girls are now older, they still take up a lot of my time, not to mention the endless jobs around the house and in the garden!

Sport is a big part of my life, and I played netball and touch until recent years. I started at Les Mills gym when my oldest, Brianna, was a baby, and continue to go five or six days a week. I haven't yet managed to convince Paul to come with me! He fills his time gardening, wood chopping, and fix-it jobs for us and others.

As a family we enjoy playing and watching sport, spending time with friends and family, and playing music at the Catholic Church where we attend.

I was on the Hamilton Swiss Club committee many years ago when my children were young and my family is always made to feel very welcome



Kathy Sanders

I was born in Morrinsville, a first generation Kiwi-Swiss, soon after the arrival in 1955 of my parents Ernst and Frieda Weidmann and family from Embrach, canton Zurich.

Work life started out in 'data processing'. At age 17, shy and unable to speak Swiss at the time, I travelled solo to Switzerland (my first trip) to live and work, keenly desiring to meet my relatives, work and travel extensively. Soon after arriving I lost one of my sisters Edith to cancer (aged 21). She had worked for 'Swissair' in the Zurich Head Office Telecommunications centre. At age 19 I accepted a personal invitation to work in that same role at Swissair, then gained some good airline experience and travelled extensively. Other work experience has been varied including Ansett Airlines, Sales and Marketing, Yacht Crew, Real Estate, Tourist Guide, Motel Management and Professional Wedding Photographer and Videographer.

Some interests include health, walking, hiking, wave boarding, filming and travel. Due to my personal experience with Electro Hypersensitivity (EHS), I've had a special interest in researching adverse health effects from wireless technologies which our society uses so much. My husband Kevin and I live on our lifestyle block in Hamilton City south. We are without children but have the blessings of dry stock (our boys) and a cat (our girl) called "Heidi". Currently I am a self-employed Videographer and help my husband Kevin, who is a Cabinetmaker craftsman, while also promoting use of health and new technology appearance enhancing products. I love the Swiss people, enjoy the Swiss Club gatherings and feel privileged to be involved with helping with contributions including photography (sometimes with my husband) and articles for the *Helvetica* magazine.



Rae Acherman

The first time I had made contact with anything Swiss was when I met Vitus who was working at Ruakura Agricultural Research Station near Hamilton.

I had just returned from overseas and worked in the office of the diagnostic department. We married in 1966 and went share-milking near Matamata for 8 years before buying our farm at Whitiakahu, 30km from Hamilton. Then followed 20 busy years milking cows and breaking in a 54 ha run-off. I was also involved in pony clubs, transporting two girls and two ponies every weekend to Tauhei & Gordonton.

Over the years we managed to fit in a lot of tramping and have walked many major tracks in N.Z. as well as in Switzerland. Vitus fulfilled a dream by climbing to the base camp of K2 in Pakistan; I survived the Annapurna Circuit in the Himalaya with Mary Schwitzer. Probably our most notable achievement was completing the walk of 450k of the St. Jakobsweg from Rorschach in the east to Geneva in the west; your editor Heidi was also with us.

Since retiring from the farm, travelling & 'working holidays' have also filled a large part of our lives, having gone twice to Georgia, U.S.A. to do AB. Also, for the last 7 years, Vitus has been employed by LIC UK, with us both making the annual trip to England; we always had a holiday somewhere afterwards. Vitus still maintains contact with farmers, doing his annual AB run here. We have also had great trips with Swiss friends to East Africa, South America & the Galapagos, the Trans Mongolian Railway as well as to several European countries.

For many years I have been researching my family history and have been able to visit the 'places of origin' of my English, Scottish, Irish & German families. I have also been a volunteer for the past 14 years at Riding for Disabled.