

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 83 (2017)
Heft: [4]

Titelseiten

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

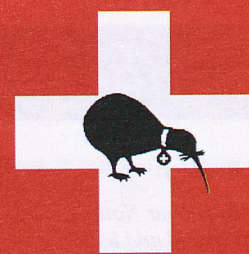
L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 04.04.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>



Highlights

- Words from the Ambassador
- Our Swiss Flag
- Leuenberger Lifestory
- Alphorn Article

Inside

Word from President and Editor	2
Word from our Ambassador	3
OSA, AIA, AHV Banking News update	4-5
Lifestory Leuenberger	6-7
Underground Part 3	8-9
Pro Patria	9
Alphorn Story and Legend	10-11
Tracht	12
Embassy News	13
Club News	14-17
Swiss Society Annual Accounts	18
Cake Recipe	19
Photo Gallery	20

Our Swiss Flag

Once again our National Day celebrations have arrived and today we look into the rich history of our Swiss Flag.

The characteristic white cross and the red background of Switzerland's flag have their origin in late middle ages. Until 1648, Switzerland was still part of the German Empire. The member states of the Old Swiss Confederacy did not try to build a nation, they just wanted to get rid of the counts of Habsburg that had tried to strengthen their influence. In the 13th century, the German emperor carried with him a flag with the cross as a holy sign, understanding himself as a protector of Christianity. Besides, he also carried a blood-red flag as a sign of his power over life and death. Occasionally, he granted the right to carry such flags as a special honour to single cities or regions. (The Dukes of Savoy and the City of Vienna bear a white cross on red ground on their coat of arms. The Scandinavian countries and Great Britain as well have a cross on their flags.) Often the right to bear a cross on one's coat of arms and on a flag was granted together with other privileges, like direct immediacy [direct subordination under the emperor's jurisdiction without jurisdiction of counts].

Old Swiss Confederacy, and the one, whose name was later in history used to denote the confederacy as a whole, was granted immediacy in 1240 and carried a red flag from the middle of the 13th century on (yet still without the white cross). In 1289 they supported King Rudolf of Habsburg in a war against Burgundy and received as a recognition the right to represent the crucifixion of Christ and the tools used to torture him in the upper right field on their flag. Originally they painted this symbol on parchment and fastened it on the banner. Only later the cross symbol was painted directly on the banner.

The larger the old confederacy became, the more they had a problem with inconsistently clothed troops that were hardly able to recognize their allies on the battlefield. In descriptions of the battle of Laupen (1339), white stripes forming crosses are mentioned for the first time as a joint recognition sign of confederate troops. The white stripes were fastened on the soldier's breast, back, shoulders, arms, leg, hats or weapons. In the middle of the 15th century, the white cross was integrated into the flags of the member states of the confederacy. Originally, the cross reached to the edge of the banner also in Switzerland, like in the Scandinavian flags.

What can be more ceremonial than the Swiss custom of flag throwing? Since 1910, flag throwing has been promoted by the Swiss Yodelling Association and rules introduced. In 1935, 55 flag throwers performed before a selection committee

continued on page 2

