



Swiss Community News

Swiss Club of New South Wales November 2025 / 256 www.swissclubnsw.com



*Christmas Market in
Zurich Hauptbahnhof*



#SWISSCLUBNSW

Swiss Club of New South Wales Limited - PO Box 3292 Bangor NSW 2234

2025/26 Calendar

Email us your calendar entries to swisscommunitynews@gmail.com if you'd like to be included in the next edition.

November	Thursday 20	SCCS Combined AGM and Volunteer Night in Gladesville
December	Thursday 4	SCCS Christmas Luncheon
	Saturday 6	Cercle Romand End of Year dinner at Little Snail Restaurant, Pyrmont
	Sunday 7	SCNSW Children's Samichlaus at Robson Park, Haberfield, 11.30 am
	Monday 15	SCNSW Christmas get-together at Royal Hotel Leichhardt, 6 pm
February 2026	Thursday 5	SCNSW 100 Year Celebration 2026, Parliament House Sydney

Dates correct at time of printing. Please check with your club for any updates.

The Swiss Club Committee meetings are now held on the first Wednesday of the month at the Royal Hotel Leichhardt at 6.15 pm.



Meet up at Frenchs Forest

with Swiss from the Northern Beaches & surrounding suburbs

We meet every second Saturday of each month at The Austrian Club, 20 Grattan Crescent Frenchs Forest, from 12.30 pm for a meal, a drink, a chat or a Jass – come along. Contact Ruth Achermann on 9451 6018

The Jassers meet every Monday night at The Pymble Hotel, 1134 Pacific Highway, Pymble 2073 from 6.30 pm

The Swiss Club of NSW is an active and supportive club and we offer our members access to information regarding all Swiss interest groups in NSW. It is important to maintain ties with other Swiss groups in order to provide an interesting and enriched cultural experience for our members and wider Swiss community.



Next deadline for issue #257 is 3rd February 2026 for the March 2026 issue.

Please email your contributions to swisscommunitynews@gmail.com with articles of approximately 600 words and images of minimum 300ppi.

Editor, Layout & Design: Barbara Koeppel | Printer: Minuteman Press - Claudio Tello

Image front cover: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/27/Zurich_Christmas-market_at_the_train_station.jpg

President's Message

Dear Members and Friends,

Welcome to a new issue of the Swiss Community News magazine and to the close of another successful year for the Swiss Club of NSW and the many Swiss interest groups in Sydney. Although we do not have our own premises, these groups continue to flourish and meet across Sydney. The German Concordia Club in Tempe and the Austrian Club in Frenchs Forest remain popular venues, where our members are always warmly welcomed.

I am pleased to announce that at our AGM in June, Felix Halter was successfully elected as a Director of the Swiss Club of NSW. We thank Felix for his decision to volunteer and help towards the success of our Club. We are still seeking two more individuals to join the committee to help form a complete team and ensure a smooth transition for the future of the club. If you are interested, please contact any of the current Directors.

Despite heavy rain and strong winds, this year's Swiss National Day at Castle Hill Showground, organised by the Swiss Yodlers of Sydney, was a great success with an even larger turnout than expected. The Swiss Club's stall once again featured unique collectors' items and Swiss goods, along with generous servings of homemade Glühwein, which proved especially popular in the cool, wet weather.

Our Buure Z'morge at the Mosman Art Gallery was held in mid-October this year, earlier than usual due to venue bookings. The location remains a favourite as it truly ticks all the boxes. This will be one of the last Buure Z'morge events under my leadership, as I plan to hand over the baton at the next AGM in June 2026 at the Concordia Club.

The 100-year celebration of the Swiss Club of NSW is fast approaching, and we encourage members to confirm their attendance as soon as possible. Please note that all financial members and honorary life members may attend free of charge, but advance registration with me is essential. No walk-ins will be permitted, as a full guest list must be provided to Parliament House security. If any long-standing members would like to share stories about the club's history at the event, please contact me so we can make arrangements.

Looking ahead, the Children's Samichlaus event will take place at Robson Park in Haberfield on Sunday, 7 December for children aged 1 to 6 years. A traditional BBQ will be provided, and every child will receive a Samichlaus Säckli. Our festive 'Usplampete' Christmas get-together will be held on Monday, 15 December, at 6:00 pm at the Royal Hotel in Leichhardt. More details will follow in the December eNewsflash.

As we welcome the warmer months, I wish you and your families a joyful festive season and a successful new year.

Your President,

Daniel Frutiger



We are always looking for members and other Swiss people and businesses in the community to contribute to our Swiss Community News (SCN) magazine and monthly eNewsflashes by writing to us with an interesting or funny anecdote. This can be about your work, family and friends or the community, or you may have a captivating bio/autobiography you would like to share with our members and affiliates.

We are also always open to comments and ideas that you may have to better our Swiss community here in NSW.

Please keep contributions within 600 words or less. You can also include a max of two images (300dpi min & artwork supplied with crop marks & 3mm of internal and external bleed). All contributions can be sent to our Editor by email at swisscommunitynews@gmail.com. Thank you kindly for your contributions.

Past Swiss Club Events

North Head Coastal Walk



On Sunday, 13 July, members and friends of the Swiss Club of NSW came together for a refreshing and scenic coastal walk at Sydney's stunning North Head, and nature certainly put on a show for us!

With 15 enthusiastic walkers gathered on what was a crisp yet beautifully clear winter's day, conditions were perfect for both walking and whale watching. As we made our way along the clifftop paths, we were treated to sweeping views of the Pacific Ocean, fresh sea air, and sightings of migrating whales breaching in the distance.

After stretching our legs and soaking in the winter sun and scenery, we gathered for a well-earned Bündner Gerstensuppe, a hearty Swiss barley soup accompanied by a cheese board and crusty bread. The comforting dish, traditional to the canton of Graubünden, was the perfect way to warm up and reconnect with fellow walkers after our coastal adventure.

A huge thank you to everyone who attended and helped make the day such a success. Whether you came for the hike, the whales, or the soup – or all three – we hope you enjoyed this wonderful winter outing. Stay tuned for more upcoming Swiss Club events!



Past Swiss Club Events

57th Annual General Meeting

On Sunday, 22 June 2025, the Swiss Club of NSW held its 57th Annual General Meeting at The Royal Leichhardt. The meeting was a great success, with 21 members attending in person, along with 26 proxies and two apologies, satisfying the quorum requirements.

During the meeting, it was announced that Felix Halter has been elected as a new Director of the Swiss Club of NSW. The Club warmly welcomes Felix and thanks him for generously volunteering his time and commitment to support our community.



Buure Z'morge at Mosman Art Gallery



After the buffet, our guests had the opportunity to purchase Swiss goodies like cheese, Bircher muesli, cured meats, Nussgipfel and more with the Swiss Club and Felix Halter.

We would also like to thank Philippe Wittwer, who filled the Grand Hall with wonderful folk music with his Schwyzerörgeli (Swiss accordion).

We thank the Board of Directors and their wonderful volunteers who helped on the day and the days leading up to the event. Their continued efforts make this event possible and a favourite among the Swiss community in Sydney.

Once again, we thank the Mosman Art Gallery and Community Centre for providing a beautiful space that our guests enjoyed and a fully equipped kitchen. Lastly, we thank everyone who attended and supported your Swiss community. We hope you had a wonderful day and enjoyed the Swiss food.

On Sunday, 19 October, we hosted a Buure Z'morge (Swiss Farmers' Breakfast) event in the Grand Hall at the Mosman Art Gallery and Community Centre.

We had a great attendance with approximately 105 guests attending. We offered tea and coffee, a selection of Swiss cheeses from F Mayer Imports, Fleischkäse, bresaola, coppa, prosciutto, and Bratwurst from German Butchery Deli & Café and Spiess Australia, mini quiches and Bircher muesli, hard-boiled eggs with mayonnaise, a fruit platter, honey, and jams; and, who could forget the wide selection of delicious, crusty Swiss bread from Organic Bread Bar who kindly baked us Zopf, Zimtschnecken (cinnamon scrolls) and apple crumble custard danishes for the event.



Upcoming Swiss Club Events

Children's Samichlaus

Children will meet Samichlaus and Schmutzli at the idyllic Robson Park near the Bay Run in Haberfield. Samichlaus will gift every child a traditional Säckli and a personal message from his *goldene Buch* (please inform us what message you would like Samichlaus to read to your child). We welcome children up to six years old and their parents to meet Samichlaus. The SCNSW will organise an arts and crafts table for the children so that they can create a gift for their parents and Samichlaus.

There is plenty of free parking along Mortley Street and Boomerang Street. The park also has a playground to keep the kids busy before Samichlaus and Schmutzli arrive. Please note that this event is weather permitting. If the weather is not suitable on the day we will contact you personally.

When: Sunday, 7 December 2025 from 11.30 am
Samichlaus arrives at 1 pm

Where: Robson Park, Mortley Ave & Boomerang St, Haberfield NSW 2045

Cost: \$15.00/child includes a hot dog and Samichlaus säckli; \$20/adult includes BBQ Bratwurst/Fleischkäse and halloumi (V) with potato salad, mixed salad, and

bread roll. Either cash on the day (the correct amount is appreciated) or direct deposit:

Account Name: Swiss Club NSW

Account BSB: 112879

Account Number: 061587992

RSVP: Bookings are essential. Please contact Daniel Frutiger on 0403 502 048 or email by Tuesday, 2 December 2025 to confirm your attendance and payment option.



Members 'Usplampete'



Join us for dinner for the last Swiss get-together in 2025 at The Royal Leichhardt. All food must be organised through Daniel Frutiger, see contact information below. Beverages can be purchased at the bistro bar. The Swiss Club will also organise a small Christmas Säckli with chocolates and biscuits for all attendees. All are welcome to stay after dinner for a few games of Jass.

When: Monday, 15 December 2025 from 6 pm

Where: The Royal Leichhardt, 156 Norton St, Leichhardt NSW 2040

Cost: Members are free; Non-members are \$10.00/ person. Please pay cash on the night (the correct amount is appreciated).

RSVP: Bookings are essential for Bistro catering purposes. Please contact Daniel on 0403 502 048 or email by Wednesday, 11 December 2025. Unfortunately, we cannot accept walk-ins, you must have a booking with Daniel. Thank you for your cooperation and we look forward to seeing you.

Upcoming Swiss Club Events



100 YEARS SWISS CLUB OF NSW



The Swiss Club of NSW is thrilled to invite all current members, honorary, and life members to join us in celebrating the 100th anniversary of our club.

This special celebration will take place on
Thursday, 5th February 2026 in the Stranger Room of Parliament House,
6 Macquarie Street, Sydney.

Arrival: 11:30 am for a 12:00 pm start

Enjoy an afternoon with refreshments and finger food
throughout the event.

Cost is free for current, honorary, and life members
and \$95 for non-members.

The celebration will feature presentations from key State and Government
leaders, along with displays showcasing Swiss Club artifacts, historical photos,
and other documents from our rich history.

Bookings for this event are now open – please contact our
Club President Daniel Frutiger on mobile 0403 502 048, or by email
dan.mar04@bigpond.com. We expect a full house and encourage you to
book early to avoid disappointment.

We look forward to commemorating this historic occasion with you!



Please transfer to the Swiss Club of NSW, BSB 112-879, account no 061-587-992 including your name.



Swiss Community Care Society



In early June about 40 members attended a special outing to see our newly renovated house in Berowra. This four-bedroom family home was a bequest to SCCS in the 1990s. Mrs Naegeli, whose husband had pre-deceased her, had no children, and so she let herself be convinced to pass on her property to our society. It is understandable that after all these years it became necessary to not just patch up the place here and there, but give it a thorough upgrade. This has certainly now happened. Everybody who saw the house, was very impressed.

A family with two school age children now lives there, and we have heard that they absolutely love the place. By the way, the property is dedicated to “Mother Helvetia”, as can be seen on a plaque on the wall next to the driveway.



While it is usually wonderful for a young family to be able to expand its space, there comes a time for us older people to shrink it. With sons and daughters long having moved away, the family home may become too awkward to maintain.

There probably comes a time when downsizing is the appropriate thing to do. This means saying good bye to many things you may have acquired over the years and to let them go. It is something which takes time – you may need help from a good friend, a son or daughter for this big step.

However, you can prepare for that big step by starting to do small ones regularly. Have a box ready where you put in what you no longer need and get rid of those items from time to time. Letting go of things can be very liberating.

With best wishes
Regula Scheidegger
President



The Swiss Yodlers of Sydney



Grüezi Mitenand,
The Swiss Yodlers of Sydney are currently on a break after a challenging but successful Swiss National Day Celebration at Castle Hill Showground, Castle Hill, on 3rd August. The biggest challenge was dealing with the deluge of rain leading up to the celebration.

As many of you are aware, we normally have the event outside with the many tables and chairs located on the lawn between the Federation and Education pavilions, along with the variety of stalls of Swiss vendors and games. With all the rain that drenched the area in the week prior to the event, the ground was treacherous, slippery and muddy to say the least. So a last-minute decision was made to move the event indoors to the Federation and Education pavilions, along with erecting a covered walkway between the two buildings so patrons would be protected from the rainy weather.

The main seating we'd normally have outdoors, was moved to the Federal pavilion where we had the music entertainment by a Swiss Folk Trio, the Swiss Yodlers, our Alphorn players, and the Swiss Dance Group Alpegruess. The Education pavilion had the BBQ area, many Swiss vendors (from Swiss Community Care Society, Swiss Alliance Australia, Swiss Chamber of Commerce, Swiss Club of NSW, to Cercle Romand, and many others), the Tombola, as well as the fun family game stalls. Despite the miserable weather, we had approximately 450 people who came to enjoy the Swiss National Day festivities in a much more cozy way than in previous years.

I wish to give a heartfelt THANK YOU to the members of the Swiss Yodlers of Sydney, the Swiss Dance Group Alpegruess and all the volunteers who helped to make this year's event successful. I also wish to thank all our sponsors for their generous donations for our event this year. And last but not least, to all of you who came to brave the chilly and wet weather to celebrate Swiss National Day with us!



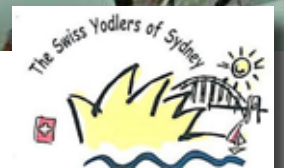
I unfortunately was not able to join, as I had to rush to Canada on the 28th July due to my ailing father, who sadly passed away peacefully in hospital two days later on 31st July. Born in Iberg, Switzerland, in 1936 (a village 7 km southeast of Winterthur, ZH), my dad would have been very proud to be at our Swiss Day Celebration, as he truly loved traditional Swiss folk music, and was part of the Iberg Männerchor for many years, until he made the big move to Canada in 1967 to start a new life with my mom (originally from Appenzell, AI). If it wasn't for him, I don't think I would have had the courage to join the Swiss Yodlers of Sydney three years ago.

Our Yodlers rejoined on 13th October to continue our weekly singing practices in Chatswood, as we prepare for next year's National Yodeling Festival (Eidgenössisches Jodlerfest) taking place in June in Basel, Switzerland. We are looking forward to it!

Mit viele Grüssen,

Daniel Hofmann
President Swiss Yodlers of
Sydney

*A proud member of the Swiss
Alliance Australia*



Council of the Swiss Abroad



On 22–23 August 2025, the newly elected Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA) gathered at the Federal Palace in Bern for its constituent meeting, held as part of the Swiss Community Days. Over 100 delegates from around the world, together with members of parliament and representatives of the Department of Foreign Affairs, participated in workshops, exchanges, and the official council sessions.

The weekend was special in many ways: It marked the start of the new 2025-2029 legislative period of the CSA, introduced a new conference format partly replacing the former Congress, and, for the first time, nearly half of the Council members abroad were elected directly by Swiss citizens registered in their countries rather than through clubs.

Day 1 at the Federal Palace was dedicated to workshops and presentations designed to foster connections, gather feedback, and provide delegates with information and tools to carry out their role effectively.

On Day 2 the formal meeting of the Council took place in the beautiful National Council Chamber of the Federal Palace. Proceedings opened with an address by Maya Riniker, president of the National Council (House of representatives) and an interesting panel discussion with the Swiss Ambassadors to Singapore, Israel and New Zealand. The meeting was streamed live, and a recording is available [here](#).

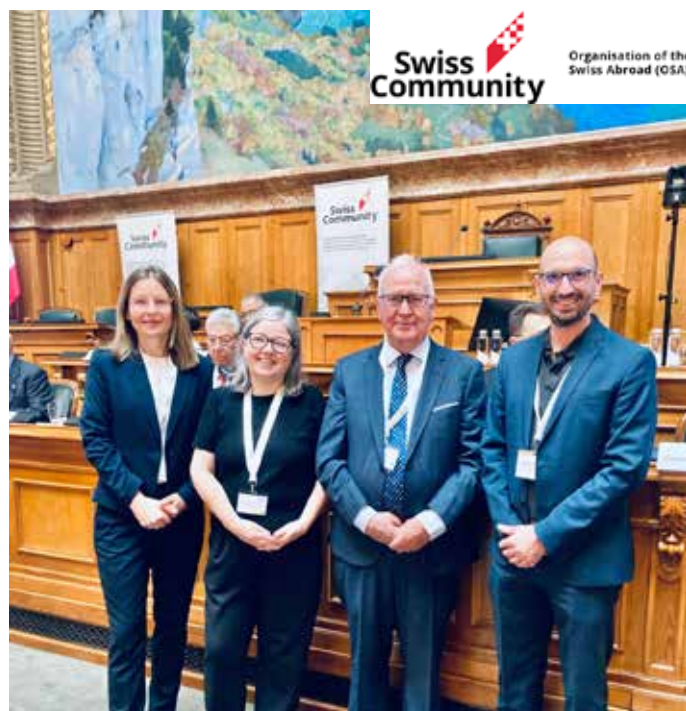
Key topics discussed over the two days included e-voting, access to health insurance and banks, and Bilaterale III. A resolution supporting a Yes vote in the e-ID referendum on 28 September was adopted by the Council, highlighting the importance of secure digital services for Swiss citizens abroad.

Representing Australia were Beat Knoblauch, Thomas Hofer, and Carmen Trochsler, with Roland Isler and Barbara Zingg following the live stream online. A special thank-you to outgoing delegate Katja Wallimann Gates, who also attended both days.

For the Australian delegation, highlights included connecting with delegates from across the

globe, convening in the impressive National Council Chamber, Thomas Hofer attending his first Council meeting, Beat Knoblauch chairing the Board and President elections in his role as the Council's oldest member, and Carmen Trochsler being re-elected to the Board of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad. Roland Isler was re-elected to the Compliance Committee.

Sept 2025, Beat Knoblauch, Thomas Hofer & Carmen Trochsler



From the Cercle Romand

Dear Members and Friends,

For the first time in many years, the rain did set in for the whole day at The Swiss National Day celebration on 3rd August 2025. The organisers had to completely reorganise the setup for stall holders in order to keep us dry for the day. As expected, the attendance was reduced but for those who braved the elements, the festive mood was still in the air. Thank you for visiting our Cercle Romand raclette stall. A big thank you also to our volunteers Béatrice, Catherine, Katja, Daniel, Marcel, Shaune and Simon. Your dedication in the challenging circumstances was very much appreciated.

The Annual General Meeting was held on 24th August 2025. The entire committee was re-elected for another year.

Our President Anne acknowledged and thanked the committee for their hard work and their dedication in organising events for the members. However, a note of concern is the continuing decline in membership numbers. The Cercle Romand will celebrate 50 years of existence in 2027 and the committee is aiming at reaching this milestone.

Our last event for the year will be the 'end of year Dinner' on Saturday 6th December 2025.

More information of our scheduled events can be found on our website: www.cercleromand.com.au

Daniel Sottaz – Secretary
Cercle Romand Sydney

Le Cercle Romand...que du bon temps

Website: cercleromand.com.au,
Email: cercleromand@gmail.com
Facebook : Cercle Romand Sydney



From the Desk of Anne Held

SWISSCHAM AUSTRALIA HITS 40!



Video from Federal Councillor Parmelin

The highly anticipated Gala Dinner to celebrate the 40th anniversary of SwissCham Australia was held on 1st July 2025 at the Intercontinental Hotel in Double Bay. A record number of some 240 elegant guests gathered in the ballroom decorated with posters of the numerous sponsor companies, a real Who-is-Who of Swiss-Australian business. With the Swiss and Australian flags, and stunning red and white flower arrangements, a vibrant ambiance was created right from the start. Over pre-dinner drinks, many new contacts were made, as well as old established ones renewed. It was also a special occasion to meet a Swiss delegation visiting Australia and New Zealand. The delegation members represented Swiss government departments responsible for foreign trade and investment, the Swiss private sector and Swiss science, research and innovation.

The Hon. Margaret Beazley AC KC (Governor of NSW) and Matt Thistlewaite MP (Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade) were joined at the round table by Ambassador of Switzerland to Australia Nikolas Stürchler with some of his team, Consul General of Switzerland Elisabeth Bösch-Malinen, Swiss State Secretary for Education, Research and Innovation Martina Hirayama, and Simone Wyss Fedele, CEO of Switzerland Global Enterprise (S-GE), the official Swiss organisation for export and investment promotion.



The Hon. Margaret Beazley with Consul General Elisabeth Bösch-Malinen

A vivacious MC in a red jacket and white shirt (of course) led through the proceedings of the night, a 3-course dinner mixed with motivating speeches, interesting reflections on the past, present and future of SwissCham and Switzerland in general, and some personal anecdotes. Appearing on the huge screens, the personal video from Federal Councillor Guy Parmelin, Vice-President of the Swiss Confederation and Head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research, was shown. On that particular day, he was on his way to Argentina, to sign international EFTA/Mercosur trade agreements.

It was a historic moment when all attending former and current Board members and Chairs posed for a group photograph, with founding member and first President Peter Meury shaking hands with the ninth and current Chair, Allison Rossiter, CEO of Genetic Signatures. Also seen together were all four General Managers so far, with Martin Scarpino, a former Board member, appointed CEO in 2017.



Kim & Peter Pluess (former Chair), founding President Peter Meury with Pat



Chair Allison Rossiter

An interview in German can be found on SBS, <https://www.sbs.com.au/language/german/en/podcast-episode/40-years-of-swisscham-australia/ffuosjkk6>.

A breath of Swiss mountain air caused the majority of the guests to point their mobile phones even higher – with loud bell ringing and energetic swinging of Swiss flags, the Swiss Yodellers and Alphorns NSW made their entrance to perform some famous Swiss yodelling, hands in pocket as is the tradition. Looking closely, you discovered that SwissCham



Current CEO SwissCham Martin Scarpino

CEO and organiser of the evening Martin Scarpino had changed from his business suit into a red embroidered shirt to take his place with his yodelling colleagues on stage.



Swiss Yodlers getting ready

An anniversary is also a time to look back to the beginnings and to point out just a few highlights. The Swiss-Australian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (then called SACCI) was incorporated in 1985, initiated by local businesspeople representing various Swiss enterprises, with the aim to create a platform and network for trade and investment between Switzerland and Australia. In May 1990 (when mobile phones were large as a brick, fax was used more than AI and Bob Hawke was PM), a full-time secretariat opened in Sydney with an employed General Manager. An enthusiastic dedicated group of Directors provided professional and financial support on an honorary basis. Chapters existed in Brisbane and Melbourne. In 2013, SACCI was rebranded as SwissCham Australia, to conform with the global guidelines of the Union of Swiss Chambers of Commerce Abroad.

The Chamber had to overcome many challenges till it grew and became known as an important base for large, medium and small enterprises involved in Swiss-Australian business. For many years, daily trade enquiries from the public were also passed on to the Chamber by the Swiss Consulate and Embassy.

Let's look at just a few activities over the years, usually involving member companies: seminars, workshops and At-Home introductions; specialised presentations affecting the ever-evolving business environment; participation at

the prominent Swiss Pavilions at selected trade exhibitions in Sydney and Melbourne; introductions to government representatives and agencies; renowned guest speakers from either country; joint events with the European Chambers; annual Golf Days; tours in gumboots and hard hats through the Sydney Harbour tunnel under construction, to check out the waterproofing by Swiss specialist SIKA; Swiss Banking Forums in 1995 with the CEO's of the then major three Swiss banks in Sydney and Melbourne, together with the respective State Treasurers. Black tie Swiss National Day Balls; cooking classes for one of the most famous Swiss dish, Gschnezteltes with Röstli (diced veal in cream sauce with potato rösti) using sweet potatoes and kangaroo meat. During the unforgettable Sydney2000 Olympics/Paralympics, seminars on Location Switzerland, a Presence Suisse information desk in the Olympic House of Switzerland as well as the official receptions for the Swiss Olympic/Paralympic teams; regular webinars during COVID.

Some of these mentioned events are no longer taking place or have been given a new innovative direction. An annual highlight now is the Swiss Business Award Ceremony. Exclusive Ladies' Boardroom Lunches have been introduced. Today, an office in the city is really no longer necessary. A first contact is made via www.swisscham.com.au.

A radiant Chair Allison Rossiter closed the evening with a round of big applause and warm thanks. The guests slowly left, with a practical Curaprox travel toothbrush kit, Lindor chocolates and an informative booklet with special messages, photographs taken over the years and interesting facts and statistics. The booklet also listed the names and logos of all the loyal and generous sponsors and supporters, without whom the Anniversary Gala would not have been possible - a great souvenir to keep from a wonderful glittering night, where every single guest felt special to have attended this celebration of a very long-standing and respected connection and friendship between Australia and Switzerland. – heldanne@yahoo.com



SWISS General Manager Anil Rodricks with door prize, Allison Rossiter middle

Anne Held was the first General Manager of SwissCham from 1990 to 2002. Photos courtesy of Matt Kemp Photography.

Swiss Club Members Corner

Welcome to our new members

Karina Maynard
Michael Kessar
Walter Schellenberg
Annemarie Limacher
Bernadette Hartmann
Andre Wyrsh
Lidya Wyrsh
Irene Bennet
Rolf Gschwind
Jenny Gschwind
Beat Birchmeier
Esther Birchmeier
Marie Oberholzer
Oscar Oberholzer
Kurt Von Buren
Nermina and Klaus Weber

Thank you for signing up with the Swiss Club.

We look forward to seeing you at our Swiss Club events.

★ **HAPPY** ★
BIRTHDAY!

Congratulations to

Rudi Wettstein

who is celebrating his 90th birthday

and to

Lorenz Bolli

and

Paul Blunschi

who are celebrating their 80th birthday!

We wish you a wonderful
celebration and the very best for
the coming year!

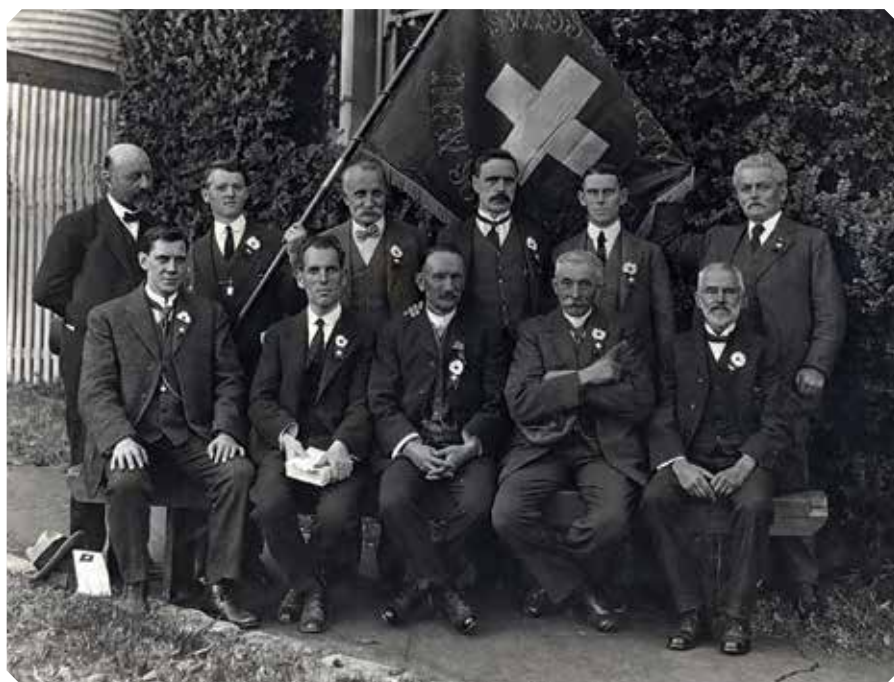


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Beratung in sämtlichen
Rechtsfragen betreffend
Schweizer Recht sowie
Schweiz-Australische
Rechtsprobleme

History, Heritage and Timeless Treasure



There has been more development with regard to the ten unique Silver Gelatine photographs of the Swiss Society of NSW, forerunner of the Swiss Club of NSW, which feature in the three publications of the Swiss Community News (2019 issues 236, 237 and 238) and which were exhibited at a function for the Swiss Seniors at the Jubilee Room of Parliament House on 8 March 2019.

The beautiful and very special banner of the Swiss Society of New South Wales which marks the “eleven-men photograph”, is double-sided, with the Swiss cross on its red background surrounded by the words Swiss Society of New South Wales, while on the back, beautifully embroidered, is the image of the mythical Helvetia, symbol of Switzerland, a Swiss shield in her right and a lyre in her left hand, also on a red background, all in silk, framed with silk cords and fringes.

We have been trying to identify the eleven men in that photograph to find out more about the Swiss Society and the people who made it work. Dr Bettina Boss had mentioned in issue 247 (November 2022) of the SCN that three of the eleven men had been identified. They are Messrs J.M. Kohler and S. Fusedale (back row fourth and fifth from left) identified by Rev. John Kohler and J.U. Vonwiller (front row last on the right) according to his great granddaughter Nicole Vonwiller.

The book *The Swiss in New South Wales – a History* depicts on page 38 the members of the Swiss Club of 1932, all individually named. Although the people are a bit older by then, five of them can be identified on

the eleven-men photograph and who, according to minutes of meetings of the Swiss Society, were office bearers in its committees. They are Messrs J.J. Roth standing, outer left. Next to him is Hans Schiess, proudly holding up the banner. Sitting on the outer left is Alfred Wunderlich, next to him Eugen Bloch and then Charles Brunner, President of the Swiss Society in 1918. They rotated the committee appointments every year, to share the work and responsibilities.

From photographs of the Wunderlich Brothers (Ernest, Dr Otto and Alfred), well known industrialists, we also recognise Ernest under the banner between Schiess and Kohler. Ernest

loved music and trained the choir’s singing for the Swiss National Day celebration of 1918. Therefore, nine of the eleven men could thus far be named, while two remained a puzzle.

As can be seen from the complete series of photographs published in 2019 in the Swiss Community News, there is a ‘mystery man’ who appears in all ten of them. On the eleven-men photograph he is sitting, fourth from left, between Brunner and Vonwiller. We had a hunch, but no means to find documented evidence of who he was until some weeks ago when this all changed. I came across a report from my late husband Armin Roth of a phone call he had received in 2001, which reads as follows:

"It is coincidence that in March this year, a Mrs Isabel Meier, resident at Parramatta Park, rang me on the basis of their contacts with the Reverend John Kohler of St. Paul's Anglican Church at Burwood, whose father and grandfather had been friends of the Meier's and the Reverend confirmed that the son of Mrs Meier, Michael, resident on the Central Coast, 'was a contemporary of his since their joint times at the same school'. This Mrs Meier is the wife of a son of a Mr John Evangelist Meier who died on or about 1918. His date of birth was back in 1858, who arrived in Australia in 1888 and took over a restaurant by the name of Trocadero, where the Swiss Society met.

This Mr John Evangelist Meier also became one of the committee men of the Society. So, Mrs Meier's husband was a contemporary of Reverend Kohler's father, Mr Norman Kohler, who had been one of

the outstanding Presidents of the Swiss Club and associated with it from the late 1940s to the early 1960s.

Mrs Meier is to move into a retirement village and is 'cleaning out her house'. Once her son Michael has approved things, she will call me to collect some boxes which contain materials from her husband's time and she believes also from his father. This would be probably the 'last living connection' to the early days, and it will be interesting material, supposedly some photographs are amongst the goodies in the boxes."

Our parcel of photographs in hand which has been advertised as 'Swiss Society of NSW' is obviously a family album that was treasured by Isabel Meier who expressed her concern to Armin that it could be of interest to the Swiss Club. Mentioning that they were possibly photographs of her late husband and his father, owner of the Trocadero Café/Restaurant in Castlereagh Street, there is no doubt now that the so-called 'mystery man' is none other than John Evangelist Meier who, according to a report by the Swiss Society, "was always welcoming compatriots and offered them a place to gather for meetings and events". The Society's annual report, dated 1st of December 1918, reads:

"Our first August fete has been a great success both financially and socially. It is with great regret that we have to record the loss of two members of the society viz. Mr. J Meier late of the Trocadero, and Mr Robert Maurer, and we wish to express our deep sympathy to both families. In regard to the death of Mr Meier especially, we have lost one of our best Swiss who has done more for our compatriots than anyone else. He was, in all the years he has been in this State, a most active member and had the satisfaction to see a Society grow up from a very small membership to its present-day members."

John E Meier had arrived in Sydney in 1888 at the age of 30. When he was 50, he married Alicia Shepherd. After the wedding, according to the newspaper, they went on a trip around the world. We can see the couple as the last passengers on the back of a sightseeing coach in New York.

Another photograph depicts most probably a visit to relatives but the picture that tugs at my heartstrings is Mr J.E. Meier carrying his young son John Pickwick on his shoulders. Sadly the boy was only nine years old when his father died of a serious illness in November 1918. One must assume that the eleven-man photograph might have been one of the last photographs the Meier family had of him.



This locks this main photograph into that space of time. We can see these old friends dressed in celebratory vein, proudly wearing their new Swiss badges on their label adorned with a handcrafted white daisy, commemorating Swiss national day. It is a homogeneous group of visionary men, motivated, showing comradeship and perseverance aiming for an ultimate club that would in the prevailing social culture of the time give the Swiss Society official status on accepted rules.

It is an honoured tradition that Swiss national days are celebrated in the presence of an official consular representative. Mark Rutty, a longtime Consul of Switzerland in NSW, had left his post in August 1917. This prompted the Swiss government to install an administrator at interim, Mr Olav E Paus, to take care of consular affairs until the proposed Eugen Bloch was officially appointed Consul of Switzerland in 1920. I assume that the man standing on the outer right of the photograph gazing into the distance and holding the side of the banner is Mr Olav E Paus.



Isabel Meier passed away at age 94 in 2010. It was also in 2010 that collector Josef Lebovic, established in Kensington, bought a packet of photographs from a dealer. In his collection catalogue in 2018 Lebovic offered them for sale. The advertisement carried the title 'Swiss Society of New South Wales'.

It was Mr Beat Knoblauch, our representative to the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, businessman and discerning collector of art, who notice the advertisement in the Lebovic catalogue and passed it around at the 2018 Swiss Presidents' Meeting, however, reaping no interest. He told Bettina Boss who then rang me. I understand that the Swiss groups are non-profit institutions which have no budget for such acquisitions, but I remembered vividly that Armin had often wondered despondently, "Where are these photographs? They must be somewhere!" I had a feeling that maybe this is what he was looking for and acquired the photographs in his memory and to make sure that the opportunity was not wasted for the Swiss community to own and cherish this unique historical treasure. When asking Mr Lebovic why he had bought the photographs, he said that his special interest is the documentation of exceptional cultural contributions to Australia made by immigrants.

It is intended that the series of these silver gelatin photographs will be exhibited at the forthcoming centenary celebration at Parliament House on Thursday 5th of February 2026 for all present to enjoy. In a later contribution we might try to get to know some of these extraordinary men on the inspiring eleven-men photograph a bit better.

If any readers or those viewing the photographs have something to share on the subject of ancestry pertaining to these photographs, or with regard to the Swiss Society or early years of the Swiss Club of NSW, we would much appreciate their communication.

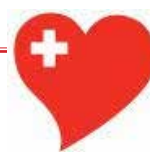
79. Swiss Society Of NSW Collection, c1895-1920s. Thirteen (13) items comprising of nine vintage silver gelatin photographs, two printcut paper photographs and one platinum palladium photograph, plus one lithograph, five photographs with studio lines "Hall & Co., Sydney"; "Norman Photo, 19 Market St, Sydney"; or "The Swiss Studios, Sydney", 10.8 x 14.8cm to 34.5 x 26.6cm. *Silvering, surface loss, foxing, tears and cracks, all laid down on original backing. One photograph in original frame.*

Most photographs are group shots depicting members holding the Swiss Society of NSW flag designed in 1895. The lithograph concerns the legend of the oath taken by three regional representatives in 1291 to establish a confederacy, eventually becoming Switzerland. The text reads "Le Grütli." Lugardon pinxit. E. Fregeville lith d'après Leon Noel. [The three oath-takers] Werner Stauffacher, Walter Fürst, Arnold an der Halden von Melchtal."

"The origins of the Swiss Club of NSW [SCNSW] began in the feverish migration of workers to Australia during the Gold Rush era of the 1850s...On 2 Sept. 1898 in Pfahler's Hotel Sydney, seven Swiss men formed a 'benefit society' for the Swiss residents of NSW. The main objectives of the Society were 'to give advice and information to those of Swiss nationality newly arrived in the colony' and to assist 'any Swiss in NSW in want of help and worthy to receive assistance.'...In 1924, the Swiss Society of NSW was changed into the Swiss Club of NSW." Ref: SCNSW.



My heartfelt thanks go out to the wonderful people who helped to come this far in this story, to Beat Knoblauch, Bettina Boss, Beat Birchmeier, and especially to Nicole Vonwiller, who graciously made available to me her ample and meticulous research.
Elisabeth Roth



Swiss
Community Care
Society

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JASSEN / GAMES IN TEMPE

A group of Swiss people meet at lunch time on every first Friday of the month at the Concordia Club in Tempe to play cards or other interesting games.

If interested please get in touch with Felix at jasstempe@gmail.com

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Swiss Community Care Society

"Seeing Sydney - Knowing Country" an exhibition with a Swiss connection



The Swiss Community Care Society in Sydney invited its members to a guided tour at the Museums of History (Sydney Museum) in Bridge Street Sydney CBD on the 4th September 2025.

The occasion arose from the Swiss contribution to the current exhibition "Seeing Sydney - Knowing Country", curated by a team under the direction of Dr Penelope Stannard, Principle, Head of Curatorial and Research.

Some 40 members, including the visiting former CEO of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad in Berne, Rudolf Wyder, assembled in the Museum's foyer for

"Kaffee und Kuchen", then were led expertedly by Dr Stannard through the exhibition rooms.

The main theme of the exhibition was to highlight the Australian countryside the first settlers encountered in the Sydney area. Some 49 views of early Sydney gave a historical retrospective of the urban development of the Colony and were from the Beat Knoblauch Collection.

Furthermore, the Archives (Records) of NSW displayed rarely seen early documents, such as surveys, letters, land grants, which the viewer can see in specially built and illuminated display drawers. At the other end of

the main display room, the local fauna, as encountered in the early colonial times, is displayed as illustrations in prints, books and as real specimens.

Throughout the exhibition period furniture figures prominently, and a First Nation's graphic contemporary design is enmeshed in the overall concept.

With enthusiastic applause for the lecturer Dr Penelope Stannard, the tour ended on a high note.

- Beat Knoblauch (originally published on the SAA website)

Swiss Community Care Society



Why wait for the next big luncheon until you see your Swiss friends again?
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Main Applicant

Partner

(full residential address with postcode)

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Date of birth: _____

Occupation: (please list both for partner m/ship)

Are you a Swiss citizen? YES / NO

Is your partner a Swiss citizen? YES / NO

Are your parents Swiss citizens? YES / NO

Are your partner's parents Swiss citizens? YES / NO

Do you have children, if yes, how many and what age?

Additional information re Swiss heritage / interests (Yodlers, Cercle du Romand etc.)

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- ☐ M Ordinary member \$48.00 (including enrolment)
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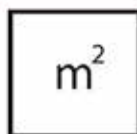
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