

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 47 (2020)
Heft: 2

Anhang: Regional news : Oceania

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. 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. [Siehe Rechtliche Hinweise.](#)

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. [Voir Informations légales.](#)

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. [See Legal notice.](#)

Download PDF: 28.04.2025

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

REGIONAL NEWS

OCEANIA

Please note:
Next Editorial Deadline
30 April 2020



ROLAND ISLER
REGIONAL EDITOR | OCEANIA
COUNCIL OF THE SWISS ABROAD | AUSTRALIA

Editorial:

Dear readers, dear compatriots,

The Australian state of New South Wales is officially free from bushfires for the first time in more than 240 days, the area's fire service announced in February. Months of devastating fires in Australia left at least 28 people dead and about 3,000 homes destroyed. Devastation inflicted on fauna and flora is too great to be expressed in numbers.

The fires were brought under control in part thanks to torrential rains, emanating from the rainy season in the tropical North. But the downpours brought major flooding, damaging winds and dangerous surf. Heavy rainfall across eastern Australia led to the evacuation of several towns and scores of schools were closed.

The fire service reported that the rains helped to extinguish more than 30 fires over one weekend, describing it as the "most positive news we've had in some time." Australia faces a fire season every summer, but it had already had months of extreme heat and one of the worst droughts on record when this one began. The heavy rainfall brought some relief to many drought-affected areas, causing people on the land to rejoice. But they also reminded us that much more sustained rainfall is needed to finally break this drought.

"Vom Regen in die Traufe" or "out of the frying pan and into the fire" – as one disaster is finally over, our region and the world face yet another in COVID-19! This rapidly spreading virus has by the first week in March caused over 4,000 fatalities worldwide. As we go to print, no one knows when it will be brought under control.

If the natural disasters or the pandemic has caused you, as a Swiss citizen in Australia, any financial hardship, please remember that there are three Swiss benevolent/care societies that are here to help.



Swiss Community Care Society NSW
<https://swissccs.org.au>



Swiss Community Care Society QLD
<https://www.swissclubqld.org.au/>
swiss-community-care-society/



Swiss Society of Victoria
<https://swissocietyvic.org>

Apart from strange panic-buying behaviour, COVID-19 has also resulted in severe economic downturn and the cancellation of many large-scale events. Even traditional carnival festivities in Switzerland were not spared, and the meeting of the Council of the Swiss Abroad, which was scheduled for 14 March in Bern, was also cancelled. The Council will now convene online to consider some of the agenda items, whilst others will be deferred to be dealt with at the Congress meeting in August in Lugano. A report will be provided through the usual channels in good time.

Until then, stay safe! *Editor*

**CSA Oceania**
Organisation of the Swiss Abroad



The **CSA Oceania** is your elected team of delegates to the Council of the Swiss Abroad. We represent the 33,000+ registered Swiss living in Oceania and defend your interests as a Swiss citizens living in this region.

Visit our website **www.csa-oceania.org**

- for links to all **Swiss Community Groups**, Swiss Organisations and Swiss Consular Representations in Oceania;
- for information about the **Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA)** and the **CSA Oceania** and the services they offer;
- for **important information** about issues concerning Swiss Abroad.

For any assistance or advice, contact the **CSA Oceania** on **info@csa-oceania.org**

Please take note: Issue 4/2020 of the «Swiss Review» will appear as an online version only,* no printed copies will be made available. This one-off cost-saving measure is designed to free up funds for the redevelopment of the OSA's online presence, i.e. to realise the project of combining the three websites aso.ch, swisscommunity.org and revue.ch into one. The launch of the new website is expected for spring 2021.

Following are the «Swiss Review/Regional Edition Oceania» dates for the remaining issues for this year:

	Editorial deadline	Publication date
■ Issue 3	Thu, 30 April	Wed, 3 June
■ Issue 4	no regional edition	Thu, 23 July (online only*)
■ Issue 5	Thu, 27 August	Wed, 23 September
■ Issue 6	no regional edition	Mon, 30 November

Please send your submissions by the above deadline to risler@csa-oceania.org. I look forward to hearing from you!
Contact: +61 (0)412 935 565.

Prestigious award for humbling work



Jean-Pierre and Annette Reifler each received an OAM in this year's Australia Day honours.
Photo Credit: Trevor Veale

Swiss-born Jean-Pierre (John) Reifler left behind a life of criminal activity and alcohol addiction when he migrated to Australia in 1969 for a fresh start. And what an amazing turn-around he was able to achieve!

He met Annette (Honi), his wife-to-be at the Coffs Harbour Baptist Church in 1972. It was a match made in heaven that led to the foundation of the Sherwood Cliffs Christian Rehabilitation Centre which has helped hundreds of people to overcome addiction.

And now John and Honi are the latest recipients of the pre-eminent Australian award, the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for 'service to community health', a recognition both so richly deserve. This is the third time in five years that a Swiss citizen in Australia has been bestowed such an honour.

The couple share a deep Christian faith. They were reaching out to young troubled people but soon realised that simply providing food and shelter was not enough. They felt the need to set up a place where people can have time to grow physically, mentally and spiritually. In 1978 they bought the Sherwood Cliffs property, located 50km north west of Coffs Harbour in New South Wales. The Rehabilitation Centre features dormitory-style accommodation for up to eight single men and two married couples with children. It also operates a farm providing much of the produce for the centre.

The Reiflers refer to those staying at the centre not as clients or patients but as 'seekers'. Over the years Jean-Pierre estimates 800 seekers have been helped finding a better life. When they began working with addicts in the early 70s, they dealt mostly with marijuana, magic mushroom and LSD, but now the main problem is ice – "such an explosive, cruel drug hitting harder and quicker", Honi laments.

Much has changed since the early days in terms of compliance and regulations, but with their eldest daughter Chantal and husband Colin taking over the reins as they move into retirement (although Jean-Pierre refuses to use the term) they say they are heading in the right direction.

The Reiflers have six children – two were adopted after their biological mother overdosed – and 20 grandchildren. They described receiving the OAM as a great honour and very humbling.

WINNERS OF THE SWISS BUSINESS AWARD 2020

The Swiss Awards is an annual program which aims to recognise excellence of Swiss businesses, organisations and individuals in Australia. The Awards acknowledge the important and distinguished contributions to the image of Switzerland in Australia and to the growth of Swiss-Australian relations. **CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNERS.**



Max Schweizer, Watch Maker (left) – winner of the Life Time Award – is congratulated by Ambassador Pedro Zwahlen.



Sigvaris Group Melbourne, headed by Fritz Voser (center) – winner of the Newcomer/Rising Star category.



Ammann Australia, represented by Paul Vanderluis (right) – winner of the Established Business category, as well as Overall Winner – receives the award from Peter Pluess (Fracht and Chairman of SwissCham) and Francis de Rosa (Glencore).

SwissCham acknowledges the great support of this event by our main sponsors, Glencore and Swiss Airlines, as well as key sponsors Jura, Mondaine, DKSH and Bei Amici. Sincere thanks to Ambassador Pedro Zwahlen and the 150 guests that attended the event held at the Maritime Museum in Sydney on 1 March.

A friendship of equals

There were few places as different in the mid-19th century than Neuchâtel and the Yarra Ranges, near Melbourne. But despite the contrast, when the de Pury family travelled from the Swiss canton to start a new life in the colony of Victoria, they swiftly forged an enduring relationship with a local Indigenous leader.

William Barak became important to the newly-settled Europeans, especially to Baron Frédéric Guillaume de Pury and his sons.

"They were people who were there," said Guill de Pury, Guillaume's grandson, referring to the local Wurundjeri people. "It was their country and we were happy to interact with them." What marked out the relationship between the leader of the local Indigenous population and the recent arrivals was that mutual regard was above any issues of race. "I think first of all

they were neighbours," said Brooke Collins, a Wurundjeri woman and the great-great-niece of Barak. "They were also farmers. You have the de Purys with their beautiful grapes and you've got the people at Coranderrk with their award-winning hops. I'm sure there would have been similarities affecting their crops and I'm wondering if they would have had to share resources and tips and tricks." "They must have seen each other as equals, as friends and allies otherwise the relationship simply wouldn't have worked," Brooke Collins said.

Coranderrk was a government Aboriginal reserve established in 1860 that quickly became self-sufficient. It stood close to the Yeringberg property run by the de Purys which was developing as a notable winery. Proximity and

location are integral to this story. William Barak lived for 40 years at Coranderrk from 1863 to his death in 1903, then on the other side, there's the de Pury family who established Yeringberg in 1863 and who are still there today.

Guill de Pury recalled hearing his father talk about spending time with Barak. "Father always told stories about what he did when he was younger and Barak was obviously someone he associated with quite a lot," he said. "Barak would have been much older, but I think my father really liked going out into the bush with him and being taught by Barak how to hunt and things like that."

It was Guill's father who went hunting with Barak. That's only one generation removed. Guill de Pury values a different outlook on life and humanity that his forebears brought from Europe. "They came from Switzerland which is a multicultural, multilingual country," he said. "And I think that possibly made them more tolerant of other kinds of cultures or customs." That idea has support from Brooke Collins. "Perhaps the Swiss family was slightly separate to all the others. They were perhaps seen in that minority, which absolutely the Aboriginal people were. So perhaps that was also common ground."

This 19th-century close relationship between a squatter and an Indigenous leader is so unusual and historically important, not just for Australia, but also for our Swiss community.

Editor

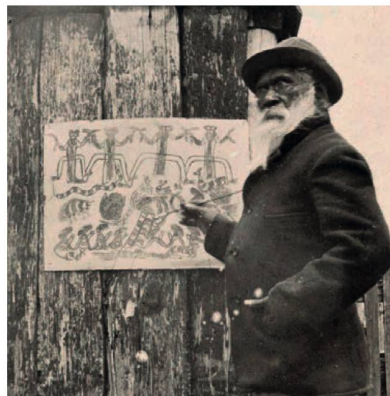
'King Barak last of the Yarra Tribe' painted 1899 by Victor de Pury. Oil on canvas



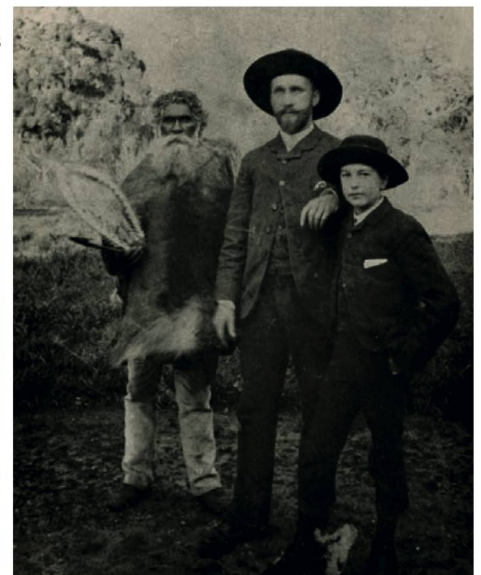
Baron Frédéric Guillaume de Pury dressed in his uniform as Swiss Consul, a position he held from 1875 to 1890



Samuel de Pury's vineyard, Yarra Valley, drawn c. 1898 by William Barak



William Barak, the artist



William Barak with Jules and Victor de Pury, c. 1883

Community News and Events

ACT: Canberra Swiss Club

Canberra and surrounding areas are recovering well from the bushfires. We had plenty of rain in February. This means the fires are extinguished and most the dams are full of water.

We are working on an existing program for the whole year. There are new events coming up and they are listed in the newsletter with date and time. It would be great to see the numbers growing at the upcoming events.

The next large event will be our annual trip to Durras North for the Canberra long weekend in March. It's very pleasant to stay right at the beach in the cabins. Saturday night we have our Raclette evening under the stars. There is lots of eating, drinking and talking. Singing a few Swiss songs before dessert is pretty common. It's a great weekend, please make sure you book the cabins early as they book out fast.

Let's hope that the weather will hold up, so that we can do the bushwalk, beaches and playing a round of golf. If it is raining, we will have to play Jass and talk a lot!

The Swiss Radio Program has been ceased. It's a shame to lose the radio program. Gaby and Werner put a lot of time and effort into the Swiss Radio Program. They have done the program for the last 20 years. That is a HUGE effort.

I would like to thank Werner and Gaby on behalf of the Canberra Swiss Club for all their time invested in the radio program. Your effort is appreciated and will be missed.

Christoph Heiniger

NSW: Cercle Romand

We wish all our friends and members a happy and prosperous 2020.

The end of year celebration evening was held at 'The Little Snails' restaurant in Pyrmont for the second year. The food and service were excellent and it contributed to make the evening enjoyable in good company amongst friends.

The committee has planned some nice events for 2020 and as usual, the details for each event are published on the club website www.cercleromand.com.au where location, time and booking information can be found.



The winners of the 'Paul Lambert' trophy: Anne and André

Our first event for 2020, the traditional 'Pétanque & Brunch at the Park' was held on Sunday, 2 February at Ballast Point Park, Birchgrove. The forecast was for a hot day and it certainly was. But that did not deter more than 32 players competing for the 'Paul Lambert' trophy. We thank the many members of the Swiss Club that participated in this gathering. Your participation was truly appreciated and provided an opportunity to meet new fellow Swiss. The day started with the Brunch made up of delicious food and champagne, followed by the competition, once the draw was established and a brief refresher on the rules of the game was given. All games were held in good spirit and everyone seemed to enjoy the day beside the heat and most importantly the rain held until the end of the day.



Upcoming Events:

18/4: Cinema, Pasta & Pizza night in Leichhardt. Details can be found on the club website.

17/5: Fondue Chinoise night at Fagans Park, Galston. We will officially present the 'Paul Lambert' pétanque trophy with the engraving of the winners 2020. Details will be available in March and published on the club website.

5/6: A Walk in the City. The itinerary will be chosen to discover some interesting parts of Sydney. Details will be available in June and published on the club website.

The committee thanks all its members for supporting these events and looks forward to seeing you soon.

Le Cercle Romand...que du bon temps

www.cercleromand.com.au

FB: Cercle Romand Sydney

NSW: Swiss Community Care Society (SCCS NSW)

SCCS NSW has again put together several functions for the year. We are always happy to see new faces at these events. You do not need to be a member to be welcomed. Make a note in your diary if you are interested in joining us on any of the following dates:

12/5: Coach Tour to the Central Coast with visit of the Dobell House (Artist W. Dobell's residence).

25/7: Swiss National Day Luncheon at the Concordia Club in Tempe.

16/9: Matinée Concert at 'The Concourse' in Chatswood and Lunch.

9/10: High Tea at NSW Parliament House where we will also see the short Swiss film 'Tracing a Fatal Journey'. It tells the story of Swiss explorer Xavier Mertz who took part in Douglas Mawson's Antarctic Expedition in 1911-1913.

28/11: Christmas Luncheon at the Concordia Club in Tempe.

Please email Beat Birchmeier at sccsbeat@gmail.com or call him on 0414 969 776 if you are not already on our outings list. We will then send you the invitation with enrolment form before each event.

Our Casual Lunch is now quite popular. We meet every third Friday of the Month at Concordia Club Tempe which opens at 12 noon. The long table in front of William Tell is reserved for the Swiss. You can just turn up. Why don't you give it a go!

Regula Scheidegger

QLD: Swiss Society of Queensland

Upcoming Events:

4/4: Easter Bunny – We received words that the Easter Bunny will be visiting our little ones at the beginning of April and we invite all our member families to take part at the Easter hunt.

26/4: Jass Meisterschaft 2020 – The all-day event will take place in the St Colomb's Anglican Church in Clayfield.

9/5: Fondue Night – We are excited to serve some yummy, melted cheese pots at the Sailing Club in West End again this year. This inner-city location sits perfectly on the banks of the Brisbane River in midst of beautiful parklands. We hope to see many of our members and friends there.

13/6: We will be holding this years **Raclette Night** at the Sailing Club in West End and are looking forward to seeing a lot of our members and friends at this event.

More information about our events can be found on our website swissclubqld.org.au/events or by calling Anita on 0401 957 309.



10th Australian National Jass Tournament

SYDNEY – SUNDAY, 7 JUNE 2020

The Annual Australian Jass Tournament (AJT-2020) will be held in Sydney during the June Long Weekend. It is the 10th Anniversary edition of this traditional Swiss Card Tournament, held each year in a different location around Australia. The Tournament is organised in conjunction with the Swiss Club of NSW.

Detailed planning is underway and the AJT-2020 Registration Form, Flyer and Rules & Format have been posted on the Swiss Club of NSW website: www.swissclubnsw.com

QLD: Swiss Community Care Society (SCCS QLD)

Our next function is as usual this time of the year the Senior Lunch at the Hedland Golf Club in Buderim. Paid-up SCCS QLD members over 65 eat free, if you like to bring a guest the cost is \$25 per person. As usual we get to hear a performance by the Brisbane Swiss Yodel & Folklore Group before partaking in a lovely buffet lunch. RSVP by May 20, to Rita von Rotz: 0431 707 144 or Anita Bickel: 0457 457 211.



VICTORINOX

SWISS CARD FRESH ENERGY MULTIFUNCTIONALITY IN A FRESH MINTY ELEGANCE

Slim, yet secretly strong, the credit-card-sized SwissCard Special Edition effortlessly houses ten functions in an 80s-inspired fresh mint color.



**FROM THE MAKERS OF THE
ORIGINAL SWISS ARMY KNIFE™
ESTABLISHED 1884**

Our aim is still to keep in touch and promote contact among Swiss people living in or near Brisbane. We would be happy to hear from any Swiss people interested in joining us either as members or volunteers.

QLD: Yodel Choir & Folklore Group 'Baerg-Roeseli'



We are so lucky: at the end of 2019 we gained three members and now another three new persons are coming to rehearsals while considering joining. There is a lot of work to integrate new singers, but we are up to the challenge, so happy for fresh enthusiasm.

After 30 years we have changed our rehearsals from Thursdays to Tuesdays. It is strange, but in fact very convenient. Great start to the week!

We were invited for the 75th birthday party of a Swiss member of the Swiss Club. All his guests were Australians and they didn't get enough of listening to us and playing with our rhythmic instruments. That's wonderful, simple, we like to please our audience.

It's always the right time to join, simply contact Gabriel 0435 570 241, yodel@swissclubqld.org.au

QLD: Fraser Coast Swiss Group

January and February lunches attracted again 25-30 people, including three guests from Switzerland who were house sitting or visiting relatives here. The Jass group also had some fun on Saturdays.

Upcoming Events:

15th of each month: lunch at AquaVue, Esplanade Torquay-Hervey Bay or as advised.

12/4: Easter Bunny – Easter Sunday Brunch at the Beach with Waie, Zopf and Eiertütsche or Cervelats from the grill.

For details of any of the events contact cecile.scherrer@bigpond.com or 0409 286 326 or visit www.swissclubqld.org.au/fraser-coast

SA: Swiss Club of South Australia

Events for young, old, and everyone in between. We speak French, German, Italian, Swiss German and of course English, we can't wait to see you at our 2020 events:

9/5: Fondue Night

1/8: Swiss National Day

25/9: AGM

25/10: Forest Get Together

6/12: Christmas Party

For further details of all events, how to become a member or getting in touch with our business partners, head to our website www.swissclubsau.com.au

Swiss Moving Service AG



worldwide moving service

to and from anywhere in Switzerland and the world

- Personal service and individual advice
- Door to door service for household goods, cars and motor bikes
- Full and partial container service to/from all major places in the USA, Canada, Australia, Asia, Latin America, Middle East + Africa

Wiesenstrasse 39
CH-8952 Schlieren Zurich
Switzerland

phone +41 44 466 9000
fax +41 44 461 9010
www.swiss-moving-service.ch
info@swiss-moving-service.ch

Did you know there's a Swiss Radio Station? Tune in to SEBI (103.1FM) on a Saturday – 6pm to 7pm.

Henri Guillaume

VIC: Trachtengruppe Schwyzergruess A.S.C.C.

The group had a very successful **Mystery Trip**. 104 seniors joined us on a sunny day to visit the Mont De Lancey homestead in Wandin. Most of the seniors had never visited this historic home and museum, which houses a large collection of cultural memorabilia left by one of the Swiss pioneer families of the 1850s. Without a doubt, this was a big talking point.

After a walk in the beautiful flowering spring garden, we all returned to drive to a lovely Hotel for a well deserved lunch.



On behalf of the group, I would like to thank everyone who has supported us to make this great event possible.

Our next function will be the **Kaffeeklatsch** on Sunday, 23 August. Everybody is welcome. The next **Mystery Trip** will take place on Wednesday, 11 November.

VIC: Swiss Folk Dance Group Alpenrose

The group is back from the summer break. Learning new dances and practising old ones will help us to keep Swiss folklore alive in Australia.



The Swiss Society of Victoria's purpose is to assist fellow Swiss in Victoria, old and young, who need financial or personal support. If you are experiencing difficulties, or you know of someone who does, please contact us. We are here to help.

Patrick Albert – M: 0449 999 645 – E: patalbertaus@gmail.com
Registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ABN 41 419 264 390)

On Saturday, May 2 the group will once again organise the popular **Unterhaltungsabend** at the Swiss Club. It will be a fun night for young and old. Kapelle Gruezi Mitenand will entertain and a 3-course dinner will be served. Cost \$45/person, bookings can be made by contacting the Swiss Club on 9650 1196 or ring Sylvia on 9531 6575 or 0409 968 624.

VIC: The Matterhorn Yodel Choir

The first Jassabend was a terrific night with a large crowd in attendance. 50 players came from all over the place to participate in the card action.



Our newest member is the lovely Alison (19) has been enthusiastically welcomed as she sings along with her grandfather Sepp. We always welcome new members. You don't have to be Swiss, our members include Austrian, German and Australian.

The singers meet every second Wednesday in Mount Waverley. If you feel like coming along to see if you would

perhaps like to join us, please call our conductor Chris 9754 7390 so we can advise you of practice session details.

Upcoming Events:

25/4 & 8/8: Matterhorn Jass Night - Horticultural Centre, 82 Jolimont Road, Forest Hill. Start 7.30pm. All levels welcome. Cost \$25/person incl. supper. Please contact Sepp Goldiger on (03) 9758 1586 or 0425 791 036 for bookings.

VIC: Groupe Romand du Victoria

The Groupe Romand was founded in 1990 as a social club for French-speaking Swiss and other Francophones to meet and enjoy each other's company in a relaxed and informal atmosphere. We are affiliated with the Swiss Club of Victoria but have our own membership structure.

The Group organises a number of recurring events like fondue or raclette evenings, picnics, pétanque afternoons, mini-golf days and the viewing of French movies. We are also active within the wider Swiss community for the celebration of the Swiss National Day as well as Swiss cultural events such as the Swiss Festival.

New members, new ideas and new talent are always welcome. Contactez-nous!

Patricia Callegari-Medcalf, Présidente
T: 9583 2860 M: 0408 299 660
secretairegrouperomand@gmail.com

VIC: Les Bavards – The 'Chatterboxes'

This group started a few years ago on the request of a few German-speaking compatriots wishing to keep or improve their French and is convened by members of the Groupe Romand.

Every second and fourth Tuesday of the month, they meet at the Swiss Club, where they converse in French for an hour before enjoying a meal (optional).

For further details, please contact:
Rémy Favre, T: 9571 2835, M: 0412 135 095, E: remy@favrecranage.com
Annelise Kavadas, T: 9489 0274, M: 0409 509 343, E: annelise.kavadas@gmail.com



SWISS CLUB
OF VICTORIA

The Swiss Club of Victoria, located in Melbourne CBD, invites suitably qualified applicants to tender for the licensing and provision of Swiss inspired food and beverage services for the Swiss Club Restaurant.

For more information or a copy of the full Request for Tender (RFT) document kindly contact Claude Alain Staub +61 433 888 889 or claude@swissclubvic.com.au



ADVANCED NOTICE:

Saturday, 24 October – 4pm to 8pm
Sunday, 25 October – 10am to 4pm
@ Gasworks, Albert Park, Melbourne

On Saturday night we are introducing a 'festival within the festival' – our **ALPINE TWILIGHT FESTIVAL** which is bringing your typical Swiss Mountain Party to Australia! Inspired by the 'Zauberwald' in Lenzerheide visitors will be greeted by twinkling lights, food trucks, an igloo bar, artisan market stalls and entertainment!

Our Sunday **SWISS ALPINE SPIRIT FESTIVAL** program can be enjoyed by young people, families, culture and language enthusiasts and anyone who loves a great day out with some amazing alpine food and entertainment! We will have a full entertainment program, food & drink, a raffle with amazing prizes to win and our beloved scavenger hunt with lots of surprises. You will feel right at home in our cosy little Swiss Mountain Village setup!

Please contact us for sponsorship opportunities and if you are interested in hiring a stall. We are also looking for a **VOLUNTEER ELECTRICIAN!**

For updates please follow us on **facebook** www.facebook.com/swissfestivalinc or visit our website www.swissfestival.com.au or e-mail rolf@swissfestival.com.au

Diplomatic & Consular Information



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Carl Lutz – the Swiss man who saved tens of thousands of Jews

DIDIER BOSCHUNG | DEPUTY CONSUL GENERAL, SYDNEY



Swiss Diplomat Carl Lutz and wife Gertrud in Budapest

The story of this important yet largely unknown Swiss figure began in March 1944 when Nazi Germany invaded Hungary. In order to save tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews, a whole network was put in place in Budapest over the course of several months to save as many as possible.

Behind this was Vice-Consul Carl Lutz, the Head of the foreign interest at the Swiss legation since 1942. Unwilling to turn away the hundreds of Jews who thronged the entrance to the Swiss legation every day, he came up with the idea of 'Schutzbriefe' (safe conduct documents or protective letters). After tough negotiations with Lutz, the Nazis and the Hungarian government reluctantly granted him the permission to issue 8,000 'Schutzbriefe', which



Carl Lutz among the ruins of the former British legation in Budapest.

helped Jewish families to prevent deportation while waiting to emigrate to Palestine. Lutz also managed to extend diplomatic protection to 76 buildings throughout Budapest that housed, fed and helped Jews. One of the buildings, 'The Glass House', became the center of his activities. There, the Zionist youth movement oversaw the huge logistical task of fabricating immigration and protection papers. They were assisted by the International Committee of the Red Cross, other Swiss and foreign diplomats, along with important members of the Jewish community.

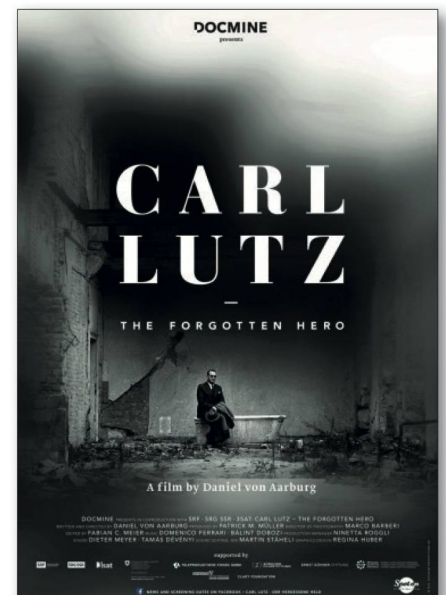
Until the autumn of 1944, Lutz, with the unfailing support of his wife Gertrud, pulled out all the stops, going so far as to hide Jews in his car and intervene in the forced marches of Jews toward the Austrian border. By war's end, close to 124,000 Hungarian Jews survived and nearly half of them owed their life to the courageous actions of Carl Lutz.

For his leadership of one of the largest rescue operations during Second World War, recognition came from abroad: Lutz was nominated several times for the Nobel Peace Prize and was the first Swiss national elevated to the rank of 'Righteous Among the Nations' by Yad Vashem, Israel's official memorial to the Holocaust, in 1964.

2020 coincides with the 125th anniversary of Carl Lutz's birth. The Consulate General of Switzerland in Sydney is marking the event with the screening of the 2014-documentary film 'Carl Lutz – The forgotten Hero' from Swiss film director Daniel von Aarburg. In the film, Lutz's stepdaughter, Agnes Hirschi tells his incredible story, complemented by statements of witnesses from all around the world, people who survived the Holocaust thanks to Carl Lutz.

Announcements about screenings of the film will be forthcoming in due time.

Photo Credit: «Archiv für Zeitgeschichte ETH Zürich/ Agnes Hirschi»



SEARCH FOR HEIRS

The Court of Locarno-Campagna (Swiss authority) is looking for information about the following persons:

Gaspere BRAVO, and **Martino BRAVO**, born in 1837, son of Gaspere Bravo, emigrated first to the USA, then to Australia and after to the USA (California).

Anyone who can give information regarding these persons, their descendants or heirs is requested to contact the Court of Locarno-Campagna by 31 January, 2021.

Court of Locarno-Campagna, Via della Pace 6, 6600 Locarno, Switzerland