

The Canberra Swiss Club Inc. Newsletter



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Upcoming Events

Put these dates in your calendars!



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|-----------------|---|
| 21 November | Annual General Meeting (Sonja Gasser) |
| 7 December | Samichlaus Tag at the Swiss Embassy 12.30 am to 3 pm – don't forget to register as this information is required by the Embassy (Cathy Schmidli) |
| 6-9 March 2026 | Canberra Long Weekend – Wombeyan Caves, NSW (Sonja Gasser) |
| Regular events: | February to November 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month at Keller of the Harmonie German Club is the Sing Together group, singing, dancing, talking all things Swiss (Cathy & Markus) |

With all events, please check our socials for last minute changes, usually caused by inclement weather or call the coordinator. If you are not on our socials, please advise a committee member in advance you are attending, and we will call you if the event is cancelled.

Members' News

Welcome to our new members - Hugo Berger, Catherine and Russell Evans, Thea and Benjamin McCarthy

Congratulations

- Martina Hoffman and Tim Heaney who welcomed baby Raphael in late September.
- Tanya Buettikofer and Jay Gao who welcomed baby Oen on 15th July 2025.



Happy Birthday Lina! On 3rd of October Lina Schlager celebrated her 99th Birthday. Lina has been a member for as long as the club has existed, making her a treasured founding member. The Swiss Club wishes you all the best, good health and happiness.

If you would like to add any news in this section, please contact our wonderful secretary, Cathy Schmidli

President's Message

Dear members and friends of the Canberra Swiss Club

Since our last newsletter, the Club has held its regular two biggest annual events: the Fondue Night and National Day Celebrations. We usually get over 120 people attending each of these events – and it's no surprise why, with such fantastic Swiss food available, good locations and atmosphere, and great company.



*President on the
Spring Walk*

We were also able to put on a great spread as a special day for our hard-working volunteers, just to thank them for their contribution. It can take a lot of work to put on an event, and we have no paid staff, so all our events are only made possible through the efforts of the Committee and other volunteer members. I thank everyone who has helped over the year.

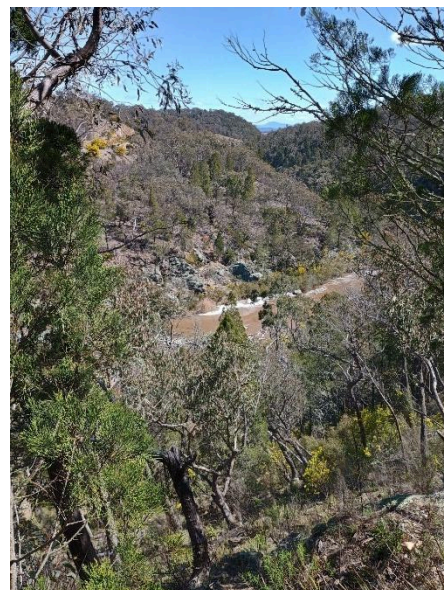
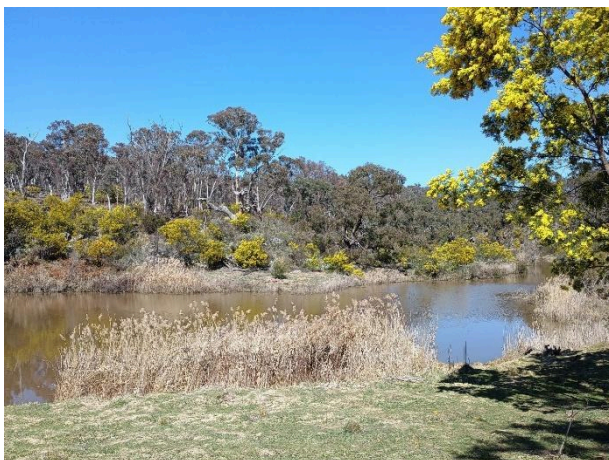
The bush walk at Molonglo Gorge was surprisingly more strenuous than expected for only a 6.6km walk, as there was many undulations and steep drop-offs, so we had to be careful with our knees and footing! Everyone made it back to the picnic safe and sound, to enjoy a few treats provided by the Club, and the weather was simply perfect.



Cheers

Sonja Gasser

President, Canberra Swiss Club Inc.



Samichlaus Picnic

When: Sunday 7 December 2024,
12.30 pm - 3.00 pm
Please arrive between 12.30 - 1.00pm, as there will be a volunteer on the gate to let you in, otherwise you will need to contact Cathy Schmidli on 0402 584 194 to come and open the gate for you.

Where: Swiss Embassy – 7 Melbourne Avenue, Forrest

Bring: All you own makings for a picnic, sun protection. The club will be providing a BBQ with cervelat and bratwurst sausages and some gruyere cheese and crackers.



Cost: Free for members, \$10 for each non-member

RSVP: You will have to register by 27 November so that the embassy is aware as to who is on site. Click on this [link](#) or scan the QR code.

Contact: Sonja Gasser

A picnic on the grounds of the Swiss Embassy. Samichlaus will read message to each of the children from his book (in Swiss German, German, or English) as provided by you in the RSVP form. Hopefully some of the children might share a poem, song, or drawing with Samichlaus. Schmutzli will have sackli (bags) filled with treats to give to all the good children.

Thank you to the Embassy for once again hosting this event.



Fondue Night – June 2025

Once again, we had our annual winter Fondue feast at the historic Albert Hall. The event was well attended (116 people) and enjoyed by all. The tombola was its normal success with plenty of donations to make sure most people or groups won a prize. We can cater for more so bring your friends with you next year! The club took the opportunity to present Matt Käser with an apricot tree as a thank you for his years of volunteer work as property officer. We thank all the volunteers who helped make the night a success.





Did you know that Switzerland is home to the world's longest continuous staircase — 11,674 steps up the Niesen Mountain, fondly called the “Swiss Pyramid.” A true climb to the sky!

National Multicultural Festival participation 2025

Every year Canberra celebrates the National Multicultural Festival where over 170 communities share their cultures through food and entertainment, with stalls and performances around the city centre.

The 2025 festival was held from Friday 7 February to Sunday 9 February. Over 400,000 people attended the 3-day event. Switzerland was represented on Saturday 8 February with a stall from the Swiss Embassy.

The good relationship with the Swiss Embassy was evident when 7 Swiss Club members (Toni, Bernadette, Mirjam, Andrea, Martina, Charles and Gaby) helped the Embassy. It was not an event from the Swiss Club, but the 7 volunteers were happy to help during the day at the stall of the Embassy. A big thank you to you! Their role was to promote Switzerland and help carry out the stall's activities.

Visitors learned something about Switzerland and one of the Swiss inventions, the Kyburz vehicle and walk away with a positive impression, a Biberli (Swiss gingerbread speciality), other goodies and a stamp in the festival passport. The volunteers had many interesting interactions and discussions. One of the visitors was the former Ambassador Marcel Stutz with his wife. It is the second year Swiss Club members volunteered and again they all enjoyed the day and working together with the friendly and supportive members of the Embassy.

Swiss tongue breakers in dialect



National Day Dinner at the German Harmonie Club

Some of the Sing Together social group were joined by several other members for dinner and singing session on our Swiss National Day, 1 August 2025.

A few more had been planning to come but had to pull out for various reasons. Those who attended chatted and sang over dinner in the Keller.

A family unrelated to our club also ate in the Keller and seemed to enjoy our singing, and our leckerli and Lindor balls. They congratulated us on keeping our culture going.



Sing Together Group

Our gatherings are usually small and welcoming, with new participants always greeted as friends. Whether you wish to sing, listen, share a story, or simply connect with Swiss culture, you are warmly invited to join us.

Our last get-together for the year is scheduled for Tuesday 25 November 2025.



Swiss National Day Celebrations

The Club's National Day celebration was held on 2 August 2025, once again brought to us by the generous Lustenbergers on their farm near Murrumbateman. Many of you may not know but every year they gather the wood, usually from their own property, cut the wood and build the bonfire all with the help of Matt and Sam Kaiser. We had a very good turnout with some new faces, and it was great to see the lampions in action for the first time in a while. As always, the BBQ was cooked by Lino and Wayne and many people supplied deserts (see the photo of the feast). This year we had three types of sausages, cervelat, bratwurst and handmade ones courtesy of Lino (delicious). Thanks to all the helpers, many of whom volunteer every year.





Items left at the National Day celebration

If any of these belong to you and you would like to be reunited, please contact our secretary, Cathy Schmidli.



Kafikränzli at Bruno's Trüffels

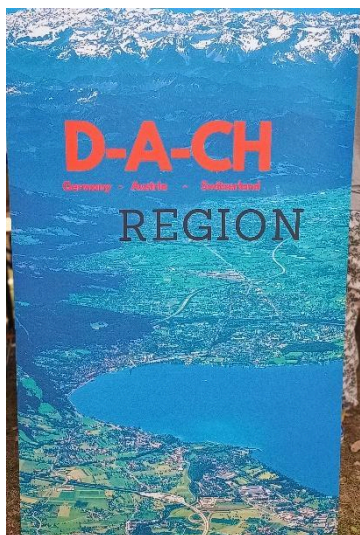
Eleven club members gathered for another afternoon of coffee and cakes on the 4th August. Two committee members, Bernadette our area's Swiss Care Society representative and 8 of our elder members. The latter were not necessarily old and certainly in many cases young at heart. Most were over 80 and one 98. As usual club member Bruno Erehnsberger and his son Matthew made good coffee and tea and had a selection of tasty cakes available. We were so busy enjoying chatting to one another that no-one took any photos. Thank you to all who came, and of course to Bruno and Matthew.

Some members were disappointed not to be able to be present due to illness or other commitments. Hopefully they were able to make it the next event on Monday 3rd November.

Thank you to Charles for organising / decorating the event and the club for providing the chocolates.



Canberra German Week - Family and Community Day



This was a joint venture between the Swiss, German and Austrian communities, celebrating German speaking culture. There were a range of events from 17-25 October, and the Swiss Club participated in the Family and Community Day.

There was German food and entertainment (including live music by Music by Albert), children's activities (including face-painting, a magic show, puppet theatre), and German-language books available at a bargain price. The Swiss stall had free Gruyere cheese to sample and an enthusiastic

group to talk about club activities. The club donated sausages to the BBQ for sale to raise funds for Spielwelt German Parents Association.



Vale Werner Gaugler 23.1.1937 – 15.6.2025



Werner was born in Stuttgart, Germany, the oldest of 4 siblings. The family moved to rural Rosenberg during World War 2 to avoid the bombings. Werner attended school from age 5-13 years, finishing at 1pm and herding cows in the afternoons to help support the family. After the war the family moved back to Stuttgart. Werner completed his schooling leaving at age 14 to do an apprenticeship as a plumber which he finished aged 18. He continued working as a plumber well into his 80s.

He started life in Australia in a migrant centre in Wodonga, then moving to Melbourne and Canberra. In 1967 he returned to Switzerland and Germany and reunited with Susi, a Swiss woman he had met on a train. When he returned to Australia, she followed, and they were married in Brisbane in 1968. They moved to Canberra where they lived for the rest of their lives. Their sons Alan and Christopher were born in 1970 and 1972.

He had a great sense of adventure and loved travel, working in Antarctica for 2 stints of a year or so. He explored the Antarctic landscapes by skiing, motor skiing and dogsleds. He also loved animals, and the family had a variety of pets including a sheep that liked to buck Alan, as well as dogs, rabbits, parrots, and a tortoise among others. He enjoyed life in the outdoors including hiking, skiing, gardening, fishing as well as camping with his family.

Werner was a people person. He loved socialising. After Susi died he joined the Cremeschnitte Chörli and subsequently was a loyal and popular member of the Club's sing together and social group. During his last illness he did not complain, he always had a positive attitude and made the best of things. He was self-sufficient, did not like to bother people but was willing to help others. He had many friends from various stages of his life and is fondly remembered and much missed by those of us in the Swiss Club who were privileged to know him.

Ticino style polenta with Grilled Vegetables and herb butter

Ticino, the Italian-speaking region of Switzerland, is known for its Mediterranean flair — stone villages, chestnut forests, and long, warm evenings where meals stretch into conversation. One dish captures that spirit perfectly: *Polenta alla Ticinese*. Traditionally slow-stirred over an open fire in a copper pot, this golden cornmeal base is as comforting as it is versatile — and when paired with grilled vegetables and a herby Alpine butter, it becomes a perfect vegetarian centrepiece for spring or summer.



Ingredients

- 250 g coarse yellow polenta
- 1 litre water
- 1 tsp salt
- 50 g butter (plus extra for serving)
- 100 g grated Swiss cheese (try Gruyère or a mild Alp cheese)
- 1 zucchini, 1 red pepper, 1 small eggplant, sliced for grilling
- Olive oil, salt, and pepper
- Fresh herbs (parsley, thyme, chives)
- Optional: a few marinated sun-dried tomatoes or roasted cherry tomatoes for colour

Method

1. Bring salted water to a gentle boil. Slowly whisk in the polenta and reduce heat. Stir often for about 30–40 minutes, until thick and creamy. Stir in the butter and cheese just before serving.
2. While the polenta cooks, brush vegetables lightly with olive oil and grill until tender and slightly charred.
3. Finely chop herbs and mix with softened butter and a pinch of salt to make a fragrant Alpine herb butter.
4. Spoon polenta onto plates, top with grilled vegetables, and finish with a generous pat of herb butter.

Serve: With a crisp white wine — perhaps a *Merlot Bianco* from Ticino — and a slice of crusty bread.

This dish bridges the Alps and the Mediterranean, a beautiful reflection of Swiss diversity on a plate. It's hearty yet fresh, easy to adapt for guests, and stunning in colour — perfect for outdoor dining or a light evening meal.

Huttwil Christmas Market – my local favourite

In my nearby town of Huttwil, each year from early November, the small Emmental community transforms into one of Switzerland's most enchanting Christmas villages. Twinkling lights spill across the cobbled streets as more than a hundred wooden chalets fill the air with the scent of roasted almonds, mulled wine, and freshly baked *Zimtsternen*. Artisans from across the country gather to sell handmade crafts, candles, textiles, and local delicacies, joined by the **Landfrauen** — Switzerland's equivalent of the CWA — offering traditional treats and warm smiles.



Beyond the stalls, Huttwil's market offers a heartwarming programme of activities. Visitors can enjoy live choirs, horse-drawn carriage rides, and demonstrations of time-honoured crafts like woodturning and glassblowing. Families especially love the Christmas Village for Children, where little ones can make their own ornaments or feed the friendly farm animals — all against the backdrop of the snow-dusted

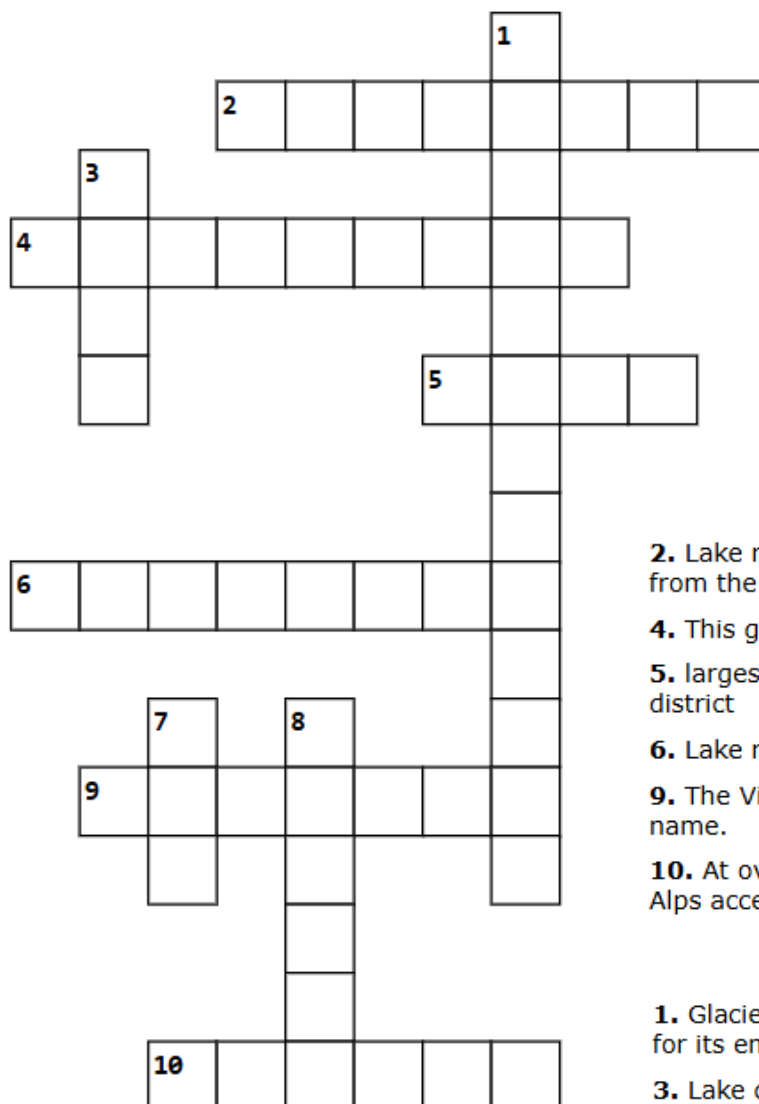
Emmental hills.

Whether you come for shopping, food, or simply the cosy glow of holiday spirit, Huttwil's market captures the true magic of a Swiss Christmas. It's a delightful day trip from Bern or Lucerne, best enjoyed with a steaming cup of Glühwein and a woolly hat. Be sure to visit during the week if you can — it's become so popular that busloads now arrive from Zurich and Lucerne. Still, it remains one of my favourites, rivalled only by the atmospheric castle markets such as Wasserschloss Wyher and Schloss Thunstetten.



Photosource - <https://www.regio-huttwil.ch/de/Maerkte-Huttwil/Weihnachtsmarkt>

Swiss Lakes Crossword

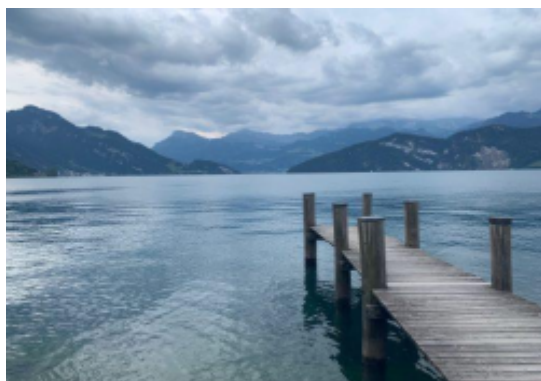


Across

- 2.** Lake north of Bellinzona named after a noble family from the region.
- 4.** This glacial lake feeds the Rhine at its western end.
- 5.** largest lake in Grisons and is part of the Engadin lake district
- 6.** Lake near Locarno, where the Maggia River flows in.
- 9.** The Vierwaldstättersee is better known by this English name.
- 10.** At over 2,200 m, this Grisons lake is the highest in the Alps accessible by rail.

Down

- 1.** Glacier-fed lake above Kandersteg in canton Bern, famed for its emerald colour (Swiss german name)
- 3.** Lake close to the French border and in the Jura range at 1000 m above sea level.
- 7.** Lake bordered by two Cantons
- 8.** Canton Vaud's famous vineyards rise above this lake's north shore.



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