

The Canberra Swiss Club Inc.  
**Newsletter**



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**Manuka ACT 2603**

Web: <http://swissclubact.com/>

email: [canberraswissclub@gmail.com](mailto:canberraswissclub@gmail.com)

Facebook: [Canberra Swiss Club \(public\)](#)

[Canberra Swiss Club Members \(private group\)](#)

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## Your Swiss Club Committee

Position	Name	Phone	Email
President	Sonja Gasser	0409 386 235	<a href="mailto:president.canbswissclub@gmail.com">president.canbswissclub@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:canberraswissclub@gmail.com">canberraswissclub@gmail.com</a>
Vice President	Werner Albrecht	6291 4160	<a href="mailto:werner_cms@hotmail.com">werner_cms@hotmail.com</a>
Secretary	Fiona Zimmermann	0438 373 060	<a href="mailto:secretary.canbswissclub@gmail.com">secretary.canbswissclub@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:fionatruuszimmermann@gmail.com">fionatruuszimmermann@gmail.com</a>
Treasurer	Gaby Hasler	0451 840 440	<a href="mailto:treasurer.canbswissclub@gmail.com">treasurer.canbswissclub@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:gaby_hasler@yahoo.com">gaby_hasler@yahoo.com</a>
Public Officer	Sonja Gasser	0409 386 235	<a href="mailto:publicofficercanberraswissclub@gmail.com">publicofficercanberraswissclub@gmail.com</a>
Property Officer	Stefan Ochsenbein	0434 637 790	<a href="mailto:sochsen@hotmail.com">sochsen@hotmail.com</a>
Newsletter Coordinator	Dave Hall	0411 284 201	<a href="mailto:triumptiger46@gmail.com">triumptiger46@gmail.com</a>
Newsletter Editor	Julie Slater		<i>All correspondence via Dave Hall</i>
Committee Member	Markus Hegland	0457 314 490	<a href="mailto:markus.hegland@gmail.com">markus.hegland@gmail.com</a>
Committee Member	Cathy Schmidli	0402 584 194	<a href="mailto:cathy@schmidli.com.au">cathy@schmidli.com.au</a>
Singalong Group Co-ordinators	Markus Hegland	0457 314 490	<a href="mailto:markus.hegland@gmail.com">markus.hegland@gmail.com</a>
	Cathy Schmidli	0402 584 194	<a href="mailto:cathy@schmidli.com.au">cathy@schmidli.com.au</a>

## Upcoming Events

***Put these dates in your calendars!***

6-9 March	Canberra Long Weekend - Wombeyan Caves, NSW (Coordinator Sonja Gasser)
22 March	Autumn Picnic - (Gaby Hasler, Werner Albrecht)
17 May	Annual Bushwalk - Strathnairn to Shepherds Lookout loop (Cathy Schmidli)
June	National Jass Tournament - details TBA
12 or 19 June	for Annual Fondue Night - dates to be confirmed, see our socials and emails for details
7 July	World Chocolate Day – this is <u>NOT</u> an event but we thought you should celebrate!
1 August	National Day celebration - more details to come
29 August	Cheese tasting - more details to come
12 September	Canberra Swiss Club Jass Tournament
25 October	Spring Fling Picnic - more details to come (Gaby Hasler, Werner Albrecht)
20 November	Proposed date for Club AGM - venue to be determined - suggestions welcome
29 November	Samichlaus at the Swiss Embassy
<b>Regular events</b>	Singalong Group: 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month Feb - Nov in the Keller at the German Harmonie Club (Markus Hegland, Cathy Schmidli)  Kafichränzli: Feb, May, Aug, Nov, Dec (See emails or Cathy Schmidli, Gaby Hasler)

***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.***

## President's Message

Dear members and friends of the Canberra Swiss Club

Our Samichlaus Tag is always a popular event, with 51 adults and 23 children attending. The kids received homemade Grittibenz and biscuits, and fruit and lollies from Samichlaus and Schmutzli. We were able to share plenty of Gruyere cheese and cervelat and Swiss bratwurst we had leftovers from German Week. We thank the Swiss Embassy for their hospitality and beautiful array of Swiss biscuits.



Also in December, by invitation of an agricultural tour company, a couple of the Committee members met about 20 Swiss farmers for dinner and discussion about life in Australia and the Canberra Swiss Club. We had our AGM at the Harmonie German Club. After hearing from guest speaker Beat Knoblauch from the Swiss Alliance Australia (SAA) the members unanimously voted to join the SAA. We farewelled Sam Sainsbury Kaeser, Chris Heiniger and Heinz Buettikofer and welcomed Stefan Ochsenbein and Fiona Zimmermann to the Committee. Some great hampers were distributed as lucky-door prizes as well as some gifts.



*2025 Committee  
(missing Heinz)*



*2026 Committee  
(missing Markus and Fiona)*



*Beat Knoblauch &  
Sonja Gasser*

I'm looking forward to yet again attending the annual club long-weekend away in March, this time at Wombeyan Caves. This year we will be offering members some benefits, such as welcome drinks and nibbles on the Friday night, and providing some other food to assist with the raclette on the Saturday night and the farewell Sunday breakfast.



See you at an event this year!

Sonja Gasser,  
President, Canberra Swiss Club Inc.

## Wombeyan Caves Weekend Away

For the Canberra Long weekend, we will explore the magical underground world of Wombeyan Caves. You can choose to join us in a tour of some of the caves, take a bush walk through the Victoria Arch walking track to a viewing platform overlooking a remarkable natural rock formation, and enjoy the wildlife such as magpies, lyrebirds, kangaroos and satin bower birds.



- When:** Friday 6 – Monday 9 March 2026
- Where:** 24 Wombeyan Caves Road, Wombeyan Caves, NSW (about a 2 hour drive from Canberra, north of Goulburn)
- Accommodation:** Book your own accommodation at the Wombeyan Karst Conservation Reserve. They have cabins as well as camping grounds (tent, camper trailer site, caravan site).
- Bring:** Everything you'll need (i.e. food and accommodation), except we usually have enough raclette machines to share if you don't have one, and we will provide some limited additional food items to supplement your own. There is only a cafe and it is not well stocked on site
- Contact:** Sonja Gasser. Let us know you're coming so we can cater for and expect you and provide you with more details about the events.

Join us for complimentary welcome drinks and nibbles on Friday night. On Saturday there will be an optional cave tour (own cost) and a group raclette dinner. Sunday has another cave tour option and group BBQ. Monday is usually a Rosti breakfast before leaving but we'll provide some pancakes. There will also be bush walks and Jass playing and other activities throughout the long weekend. Feel free to come for all or part of the long weekend, and participate in as many or few of our activities as you wish.

[Cabins](#)



[campsites](#)



## “Kafichränzli”

It is time again to get together for our much-valued seniors. We hope you all had a peaceful Christmas and a good start in the New Year. Sure, there is a lot to catch up and talk about. For the first Kafichränzli this year we met at Bruno’s Truffles on 23 February 2026.

We would like to sincerely thank Bruno and Mathew Ehrensberger for their kind hospitality and their ever-welcoming, friendly service — thank you!



## Suggestions



Committee members are happy to hear from members about suggestions for events, or for any members who may need help or who are ill, so we can send a card or offer any help we can. And of course if you have any news to share, we would love to put it in our newsletter and or Facebook.

Also please join our Facebook page using this [link](#) or the QR code.



## Autumn Picnic

Every spring and autumn we hold our family picnic. Until now we have met at Weston Creek Peninsula, and some members have been coming regularly since the very beginning.



We would love to welcome more families with children. Several parents have told us they would like to attend, but the previous time (11am–2pm) didn't suit younger children's routines. It has also

been difficult for parents to chat, as the playground is some distance from the picnic area.

This year we will meet at a playground where children can be easily supervised while parents relax and talk with other members. We will start earlier, at 9am. A short story in Swiss German (with translation for non-Swiss-German speakers) will also be organised for the children.

Our picnics are relaxed and friendly, with plenty of time to catch up and get to know each other. We hope you can join us!

Families are warmly invited to share ideas for future activities or suggest suitable playgrounds. All suggestions are welcome — mark the day in your calendar.

- When:** Sunday, 22 March, anytime between 9 am – 2 pm
- What** Picnic for all ages, some tables will be available, Easter craft for children, Easter specialities, free coffee, Easter hunt, etc
- Where:** To be advised
- Cost:** Free
- Bring:** Food and Drinks
- Contact:** Gaby 0451 840 440



## Annual Bushwalk

This year's annual bushwalk is from The Link Strathnairn to Shepherds Lookout Loop. We will start in the carpark of Strathnairn at 10am for the 7km moderate return walk. The expected time frame is approximately 2.5 hours. On return to the carpark there is Stepping Stone Cafe where some of us plan to have lunch. Here you can satiate your earned hunger from your exertions.

- When:** Sunday, 17 May 2026, 10 am – 2 pm (approximately)
- Where:** The Link, 1 McClymont Way, Strathnairn ACT , Canberra,
- Bring:** Please bring your own food and drinks if you don't want to eat at the cafe. Bring water, sturdy shoes, hat and sunscreen for the walk.
- Contact:** Cathy Schmidli: [cathy@schmidli.com.au](mailto:cathy@schmidli.com.au)

## Members' News

The current committee would like to thank the former members of the committee who have stood down. Special thanks goes out to Sam Sainsbury-Kaeser who after a long, long period as Treasurer has passed the reins to a new recipient. Wishing the Swiss Club of NSW a wonderful 100th birthday this year.

If you would like to add any news in this section, please contact our Newsletter Co-ordinator, Dave Hall, [triumphtiger46@gmail.com](mailto:triumphtiger46@gmail.com) or telephone 0411 284 201

**Vale Alan Coates:** 11 August 1939 – 17 February 2026. Our thoughts go out to his wife Anna Rickards.

**Vale Philipp Kern:** sadly passed away in Switzerland recently. Philipp was president of the Canberra Swiss Club in 1989 and was the owner of the Swiss Bakehouse in Jamison and later Kaleen in the 1980s and 90s - a popular Swiss bakery which was frequented by most Swiss and others in Canberra with a great variety of bread and other baked goods like croissants, Weggli, Crèmeschnitte and chocolate products.

Philipp had been active in the Swiss Club not only as president, but was instrumental in organising the 700 year anniversary of Switzerland in 1991. For this occasion Philipp brought out the 'Höfler Music' from Switzerland to celebrate with us at the Yarralumla woolshed. A memorable event every senior Swiss in Canberra will remember fondly.

## Members Spotlight

We're excited to introduce a new regular newsletter segment - Members Spotlight - a chance to get to know the people who make our club community so special.

If you would like to be featured in a future edition, please send your answers — plus any additional stories, photos or memories you'd like to share to the Newsletter Coordinator Dave [triumphtiger46@gmail.com](mailto:triumphtiger46@gmail.com). We'd love to hear about your connection to Switzerland!



### **This Edition's Member: *Your new Secretary Fiona***

#### **What is your connection with Switzerland?**

My dad was born in Winterthur, Switzerland, and Swiss culture has been part of my life since I was born; I also lived and went to school in Switzerland (Effretikon/Illnau) as a teenager and returned again as a young adult.



#### **What brought you (or your family) to Australia (and when was it)?**

My dad came to Australia on a tourist visa in 1974 with his brothers, loved it and stayed — and he met my mum in Darwin that same year.

#### **What are your favourite memories of Switzerland (or what do you like most about Switzerland)?**

Summer in Switzerland is my favourite — the mountains, cowbells, fresh air, the nostalgic farm smells, and the food is a big favourite too, Älplermagronen, Wurstsalat, cervelat, Blutwurst, and of course fondue and raclette.

#### **What do you enjoy most about the Canberra Swiss Club?**

I've been connected to the Club since childhood and I love catching up with long-standing members and staying connected to Swiss culture.



#### **How do you spend most of your time at the moment?**

Mostly work and uni study — and getting outdoors to walk my dogs whenever I can.

## “Kafichränzli” Get-together November



On 3 November, 21 senior members met for lunch at the Gungahlin Lakes Golf & Community Club. We enjoyed each other's company and a delicious lunch with a beautiful view. The Swiss Club provided coffee and cake. Some of those present had not seen each other for a long time and were delighted to meet old acquaintances.



## “Kafichränzli” Get together December

The last Kafichränzli 2025 took place at Bruno's Truffels. Sixteen participants enjoyed coffee and cake and each other's company. The senior care team visits members who have a special birthday. As we were unable to visit Margrit Davies at home, we delivered flowers to her this afternoon. Margrit celebrated her 90th birthday in November. With the happy birthday song, we included Heiri Berger who had also his Birthday in November.



## Sing together Group

Dear members and friends,

Our Swiss singing group has a proud history. What began as the Cremeschnitte Chörli—formed to sing the Swiss Anthem—grew into a vibrant group performing at aged care homes and national events for German-speaking choirs.



Under the guidance of our former conductor Geoff, we built a rich repertoire and strengthened the skills of the core group who continue singing and sharing Swiss culture today.

Now, we've entered a new and exciting phase. We come together to enjoy beloved songs from our Swiss childhoods, sharing them with second and third generation Swiss-Australians—many of whom no longer speak Swiss German. We sing in all four national languages of Switzerland and work together to translate and pass on these songs, as well as stories and traditions.

Our gatherings are usually small and welcoming, with new participants always greeted as friends. The interest and enthusiasm from the broader community have been inspiring. Whether you wish to sing, listen, share a story, or simply connect with Swiss culture, you are warmly invited to join us. Enquiries to Markus Hegland or Cathy Schmidli.

Warm regards,

The Swiss Club Sing-Together Group

## Fastenwähe

*This is a typical type of bread baked for carnival time, especially in and around Basel and Zug. Traditionally they are covered in cumin seeds, but come in a variety of different flavours. Deliberately rich with an egg glaze, they provide a welcome source of energy prior to the start of Lent. The characteristic spindle shape with slits helps them bake evenly and creates their distinctive look.*



### Dough

- 500g white flour
- 220ml full fat milk
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp diastatic malt or honey
- ¼ tsp fresh yeast or ½ tsp dried yeast
- 175g butter at room temp.

### Additional Ingredients

- 1 egg
- Cumin seeds, or other seeds such as sesame, linseeds etc

### Main dough

1. Place flour on the bench and make a well. Add milk gradually and knead together.
2. Add remaining ingredients and knead into a fairly firm dough.
3. Cover and rest at room temperature 12–16 hours.
4. During resting, stretch and fold the dough 2–3 times from all four sides (wet hands help).

### Shaping

1. Divide dough into 60–80 g pieces and shape into balls.
2. Roll slightly into short logs with tapered ends (thicker in the middle).
3. Flatten gently and cut 4 lengthwise slits (~3 cm).
4. Place on lined tray with space between pieces.
5. Brush with beaten egg and sprinkle with caraway if desired.
6. Cover and rise 1 hour while preheating oven to 190°C fan.

### Baking

1. Open the slits slightly so they don't stick.
2. Bake at 190°C fan forced for approximate 20 minutes until golden, adding a little steam (spray water into oven).
3. Cool completely before serving.

*Best enjoyed fresh with butter, cheese, or a warm drink.*

## Chienbäse – Fire in the Streets of Liestal

Every year on the Sunday evening after Fasnacht, the town of Liestal turns into a river of fire. The event is called Chienbäse, a dialect word meaning *resin-wood torches* — and that is exactly what fills the streets: burning bundles of pine torches carried through the old town.

As darkness falls, participants shoulder huge flaming

brooms of wood, some weighing over 50 kg, while others push blazing wagons stacked high with logs. The narrow streets glow orange, sparks drift upward, and spectators stand well back from the intense heat as the procession moves slowly through the historic centre.



The custom dates back centuries and is linked to Fasnacht, symbolising the driving away of winter and evil spirits. Fire and light traditionally marked the turning point toward spring. Unlike many modern festivals, Chienbäse has remained strikingly unchanged — no electric lighting, no stage show, only fire, discipline and tradition.

Despite the dramatic appearance, the event is carefully organised. Carriers train for years, protective clothing is worn, and the route is strictly controlled. For locals it is not a performance but a living community ritual. Nonetheless as a spectator, prudence is required — no meltable clothing and no carrying of children on the shoulders. The heat is intense and on a windy day, the embers travel far.

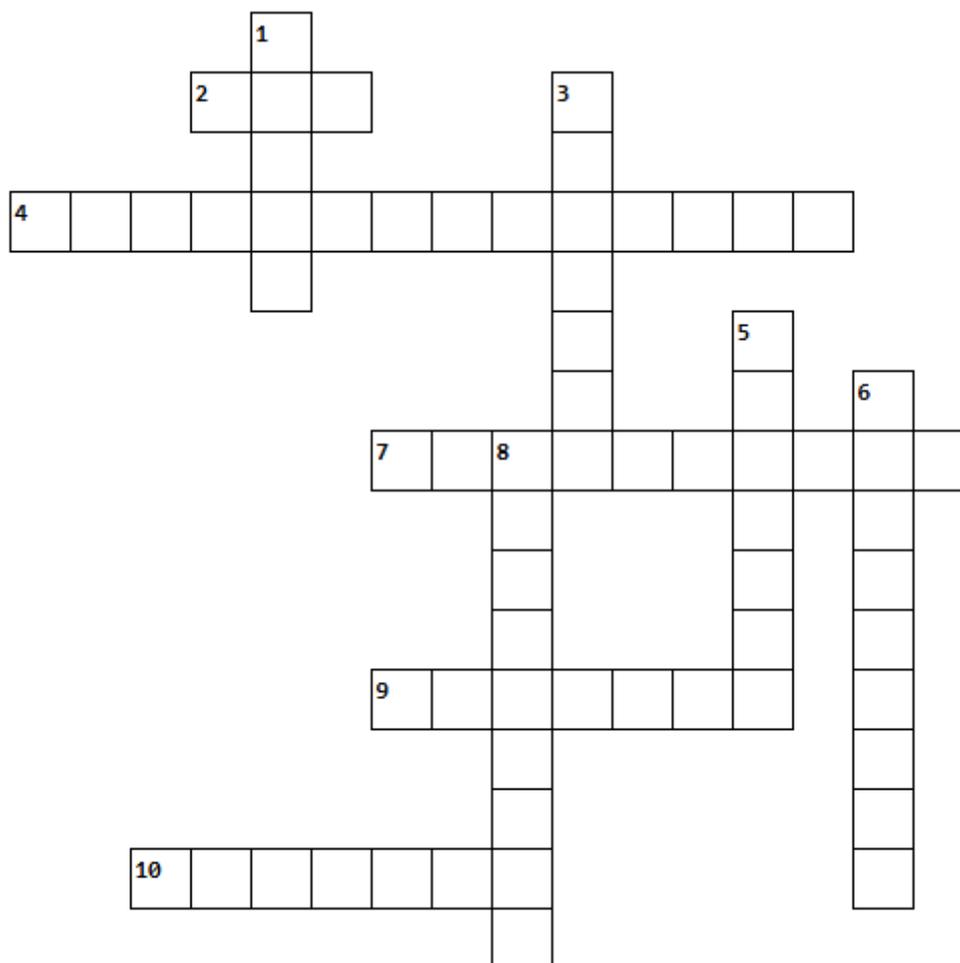
Today Chienbäse is one of Switzerland's most unique traditions — a reminder of older seasonal customs where people once used fire and noise to welcome the end of winter.

For more information on Chienbäse, click on this [link](#) or scan the QR code. The page is in German, but you can translate it using google.



## Crossword – What do you know about Switzerland

Test your knowledge of Switzerland



### Across

- 2. Animal that has right-of-way on many alpine roads
- 4. Swiss pasta similar to mac & cheese but with applesauce
- 7. Famous red pocket knife brand
- 9. The underground emergency shelters required for almost every resident
- 10. Mountain said to be haunted above Lake Lucerne

### Down

- 1. Swiss singing/whistling technique used to call across valleys
- 3. Swiss town where cars are banned completely
- 5. The only Swiss canton with three official languages
- 6. Traditional Swiss sport where a small puck is hit through the air with a long flexible rod
- 8. Swiss festival where people throw burning discs into the night sky

## A magical lake bathed in candle light

The circular path around the Burgäschisee, nestled between the cantons of Solothurn and Bern, is beautiful in every season. Surrounded by reeds, forest and open fields, it is a favourite place for walkers and families throughout the year. It is also a walk I regularly do myself — in summer sunshine, autumn mist or crisp winter air.



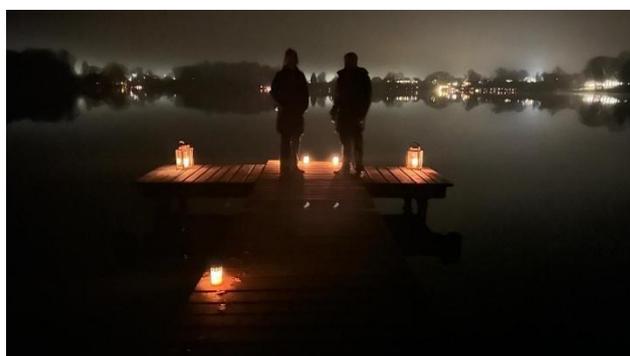
Every three years, however, the lake takes on a different atmosphere. On one winter evening, more than 3,000 candles line the three-kilometre path, transforming the familiar route into a quiet trail of light. As dusk settles, the flames trace the shoreline and gently highlight the natural curve of the water.



In some years, snow begins to fall; lightly at first, then steadily, settling on branches and along the reeds. The landscape softens. Footsteps become muted, and conversations lower in the cold evening air. Candlelight flickers against the darkness, and reflections shift across the surface of the lake.

For a few hours, walking the path feels like entering a winter tale; the same lake, but seen through a softer lens.

Visitors move at their own pace, some carrying lanterns, others simply following the illuminated route. Warm drinks are served along the way, and occasional music adds to the atmosphere without overwhelming it. Even with many guests, the circular path allows space to pause and take it in. I simply love the magic, no matter the weather.



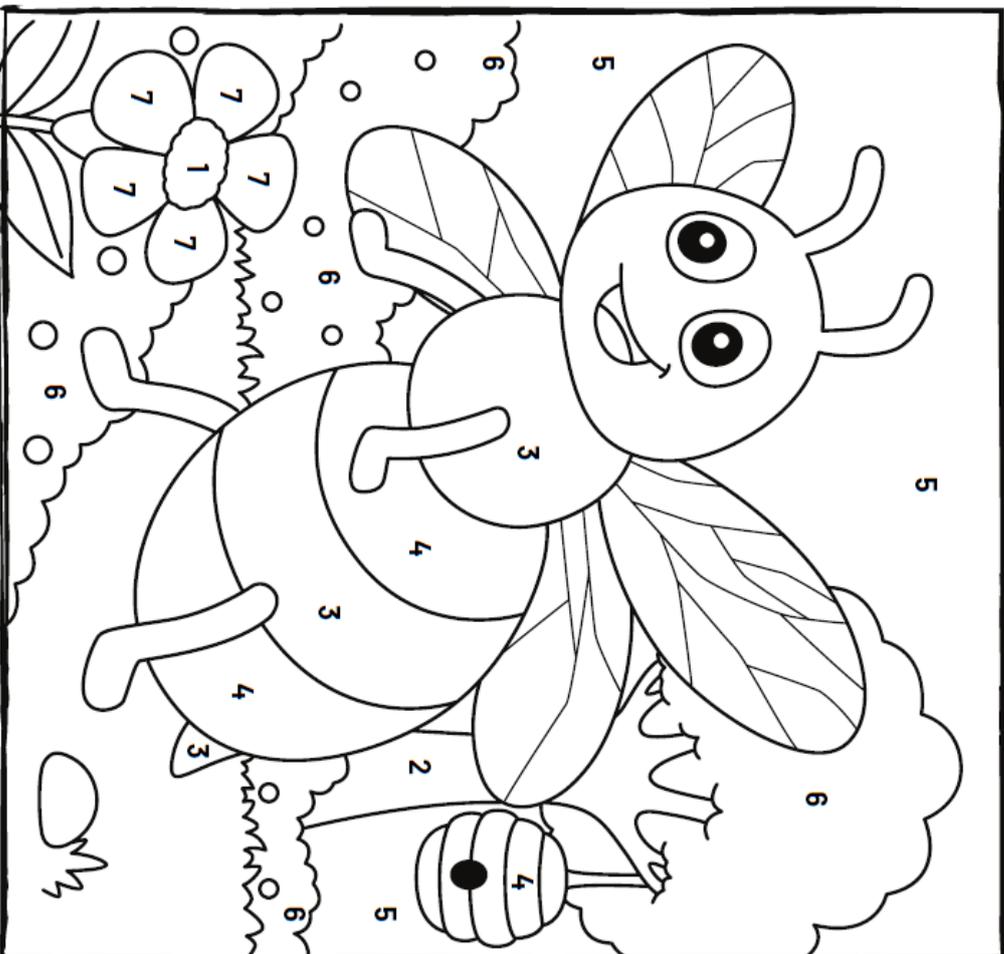
## Something for the children

# LABYRINTH

Hilf Heidi, den Weg zur Alphütte ihrer Grossmutter zu finden.



**Biene: Male das Bild nach Zahlen aus.**  
Benutze die Farb-Legende unten, um das Bild auszumalen.



- 1. rosa
- 2. braun
- 3. schwarz
- 4. gelb
- 5. blau
- 6. grün
- 7. lila