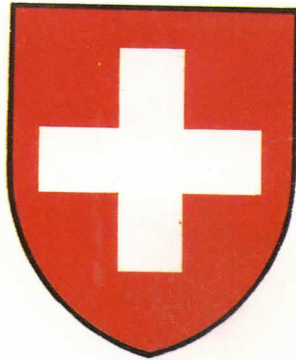


# SWISS CLUB NATAL



Swiss cantons



Jura



Aargau



Basel City



Basel Stado



Appenzell Ausser-Rhodan



Appenzell Inner-Rhodan



Schaffhausen



Thurgau



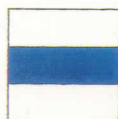
St. Gallen



Solothurn



Zürich



Zug



Glarus



Nidwalden



Uri



Geneve



Lucerne



Obwalden



Neuchâtel



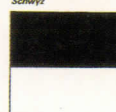
Graubünden



Valais



Schwyz



Fribourg



Berno



Vaud



Ticino

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NOVEMBER 1995

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FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

We are short of our last social function in 1995 and I should be pleased to see you all at the Christmas Family Day on Sunday the 3rd December.

For more details for this event please refer to the page overleaf.

The Members which have participated on our events during the course of the year will agree with me that much fun and good social friendship was enjoyed by all participants.

Many thanks to Elisabeth Gerhard, Nick Hames, and Walti Grab for the interesting and vivaciously loaded contributions to this bulletin.

I am hesitatingly prepared to announce that our Editor, Honorary Member and Dear Friend Rex Guggisberg has informed me recently about his intention to retire.

Dear Guggi, we do not want to accept your resignation right now, because we all loved to read about your experiences you have made during the Desert Campaign way back in the 40's.

We beg you to let us have some more of your wonderful stories filling our bulletin.

I would like to take this opportunity and express on behalf of the Committee and the Club my sincerest gratitude to You and Aggie for the dedicated and active support you have given to our Club over the past 16 years. It is our deepest wish to continue sharing still many sociable gatherings with you both, and indeed your wit and wisdom is much appreciated.

All of you will have taken note that our Bulletin cover has changed its appearance. The new look took some effort to organize but we trust that the outcome is also to your liking. Many thanks to our generous sponsors Messrs. KOHLER, CREDIT SUISSE, SWISS BANK CORPORATION, UNION BANK OF SWITZERLAND and SWISSAIR, all of whom advertise on the cover and thus contributed to make this Bulletin possible. I herewith also convey my special thanks to Mr. John Spencer Smith of Messrs. Kohler for the excellent and prompt service received in creating and printing this new cover.

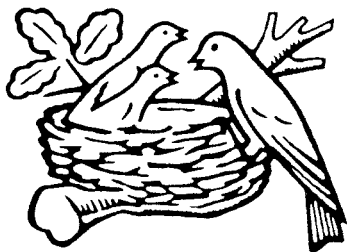
A warm welcome to the following new family member  
Mr. and Mrs. P.D.F. Steiner residing in Kloof

I should be pleased to introduce you more  
formally at our next Club main function.

In closing this last Bulletin for 1995 I would  
like on behalf of the Committee take this  
opportunity, and wish all members a very happy  
festive season and a prosperous and peaceful new  
year.

Kindest Regards

*Langenh*



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CHOCOLATE**

The **Christmas family day** will take place on the  
**3rd of December** (from 11.00h) at Hammersdale. Your committee  
has sent off a FAX to Santa Claus and we hope he will be able to  
attend to the small members of our Club. Could we please ask the  
parents of small children to bring a gift-wrapped little present  
(up to R10). The idea is to put them all in Santa Claus's sack  
who will distribute them.

As usual Cervelats, Bratwuerste and bread rolls will be on sale.  
Bring your own drinks and chairs.

The committee is looking forward to see you all

Ruth Klein  
Secretary

25th October 1995



## WE ARE MOVING

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## EDITORS CORNER.

1ST AUGUST CELEBRATIONS 1995 Did not do much for Aggie & me thanks to my heart problem missing the Car Rally was the start. First August Dinner I was in my Hospital bed looking at the wonderful view of all the Harbour & shipping lights reflecting on the water, but from 8p-m. till I fell asleep about 9.30. I was with you all at the "Black Forest" I even imagined enjoying an Eisbein.

No chance of joining the Georges at Hammersdale on the 6th I thought I might be a burden if I did not feel too well, Aggie also had a day in bed with a cold, anyway the miserable weather settled it, at least the rain stayed away although it was dull & cold, do hope there was a good attendance of members & sure most of the good old stalwarts were enjoying the day & damn the weather, I think the sun came out in the afternoon for a while.

Having missed so many functions & shoots this is going to be a rather short Editors corner. Thanks again to all of you who phoned or visited, I never realized I had such a big fan club.

In the evening Hans-Peter arrived with bratwurst, landjager, & a big box of chocolates for Aggie, a gift from the club, what a wonderful & kind thought, thanks to you all, we were missing from Hammersdale but certainly not forgotten. Hans-Peter told us the weather cleared & a surprisingly good turn out & all went very well. Also a thoughtful little function for our old Mrs. Zimmerman, I still think of her soup of over 30 years ago. Aggie & I are so pleased the day was a success.

A little club news, Thomas Ammann, Michael Planzer & Stefan Grab went to Kenya & with a group climbed Mount Kenya & Mount Kilimanjaro, a pity our new Swiss Club flag is not yet available, one each on top of Africa's two highest mountains would be quite a boost for our little club.

Had a card from Lydia she is in one of my favourite towns Thun, she is so much better in every way I think this trip has done wonders for her, & Switzerland has never looked better. I also had a card from Max & Maureen Hofer from our lovely little village of Guggisberg not far south of Barmen, many thanks Max a very kind thought. My lovely friend Prisilla Planzer one time assistant Editor is back home, she writes very well, perhaps she will give us an article on her travels & work in Europe. With my declining

health the Committee may do well to keep an eye on Priscilla as a future Editor of our Bulletin. After missing so many functions Aggie & I have at last met our ~~not~~ Consul General Mr. Leo. Renggli, a very nice interesting & jovial chap, I think we will see quite a lot of him in Natal.

I have been Editor of this Bulletin since March 1979 & now feel I am not well enough to carry on, so this will be my last Bulletin. Only hope I am not letting Hans-Peter & the Club down. I am sure by the New Year the Club will have a new & better Editor, who will give you a change from Desert Campaigns, In this Edition I am also ending Tobruk, although we still had two months to go, But I would like to tell you how the Siege at last came to an end.

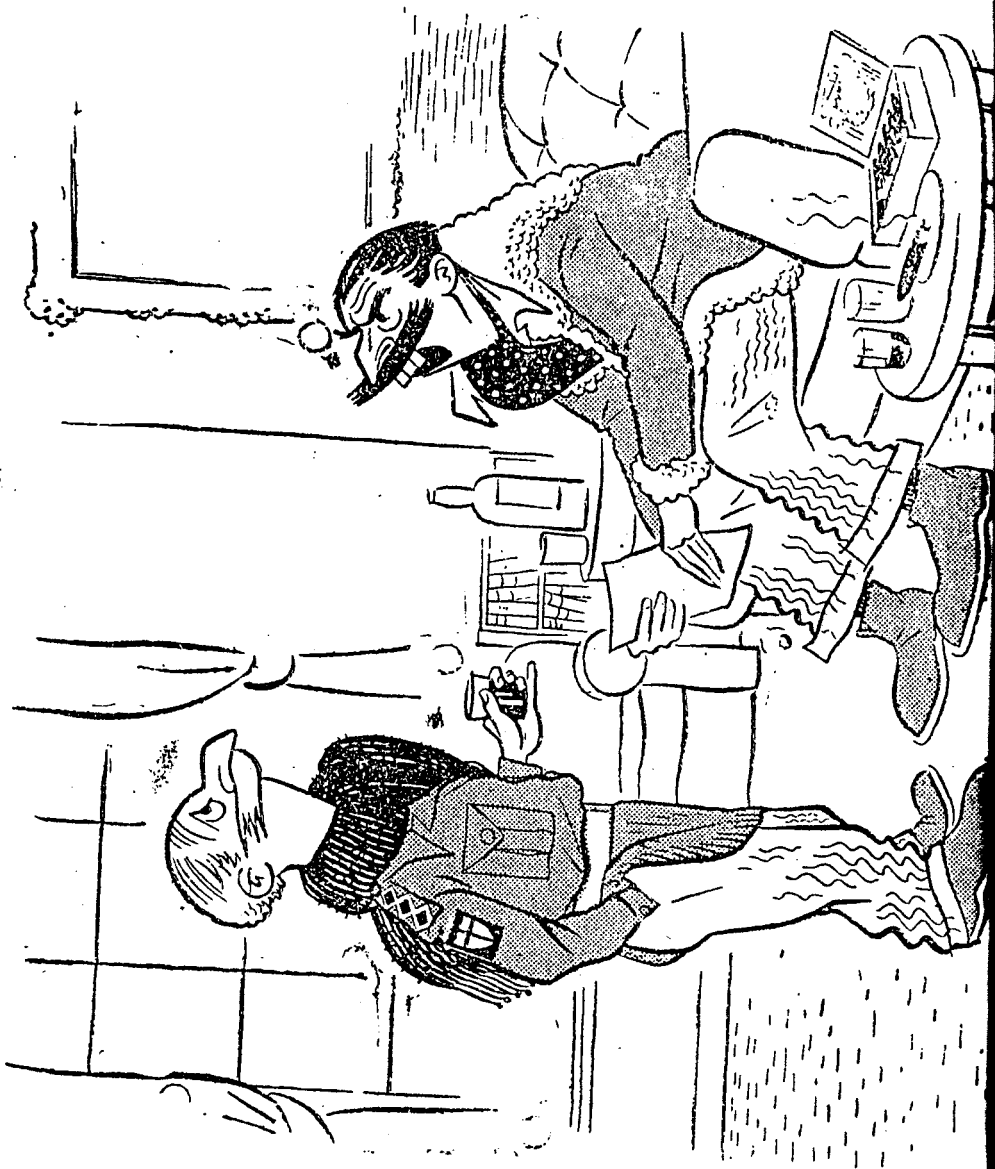
GUGGY.

At this time all members particularly the older ones will be thinking of our popular member Robi Gerhard & his misfortune, with his character & spirit he will overcome his loss & soon be back in the activities of the club. (Robi apart from Beach Breakfast was at one time our Shooting Master for a period of 10 years, he also has a Comrades Medal.

GUGGY.



*"What IS this Social Security?"*



## THE 2ND DESERT CAMPAIGN.

### THE END OF THE SIEGE.

Although the Siege has still 2 months to go I have decided due to my poor state of health to bring my story of the Siege to a premature finish. But I thought some of you who have followed these articles from the beginning would like to know how the Siege ended. Early 1941 our Desert Army was in full retreat from Rommel & his Panzers towards Egypt. As our troops passed Tobruk several Regiments were ordered into Tobruk to try & hold this little already badly bombed & shelled Desert town to try & deny Rommel the use of its vital deep water Harbour. The Afrika Korps had now advanced to Tobruk & Rommel completely surrounded the town on a 30 mile perimeter which was to remain the same for the whole of the Siege. The 15,000 troops inside were now besieged. It was the first day of the Siege . 11th April, Tobruk was relieved by Operation Crusader on 9th December so the Siege lasted 8 months, to be exact 242 Days.

In Tobruk we knew by our radios that General Auchinlek with his new Desert Army & the best modern tanks from America & Britian could now meet the Germans on almost equal terms. Auchinlek in no time launched his attack ( Operation Crusader.) The Germans surprised immediatly were fighting a rearguard action & retreating towards Tobruk, if they were driven beyond Tobruk it would be the end of the siege, & perhaps would be only a matter of days. Our first inkling that something strange was happen ing was when we suddenly realized that Bardia Bill had not fired a shot for over 48 hours, no shot every hour during the night to make sure we had little sleep, no 6A.M. reveille shot, most of all no random day shots which had cost us 2 killed & many wounded. Also troops coming in from the perimeter reported little activity from German guns & armour. The 3 of us climbed the high hill behind the workshops, from the top we could see beyond the perimeter, all seemed very quiet, no puffs of sand from tanks or vehicles moving in desert sand. But the Germans were still there maybe in reduced numbers having got the message from "Crusaders" advance. Our theory was that Crusader advancing against the Germans on a full front including the coast had found Bardia Bill tucked away in its huge cave, captured the German gun

2.

crews & removed a vital part of this enormous gun to ensure it would never fire again. We were right for that was exactly what happened. Several days later the engineers brought Bardia Bill into our workshops where it was pushed by all our lads up against the back fence, in one of the War books on the siege there is a big photo & a good picture of Guggy pushing, but only back view, I picked out my head gear as I think I had the only peaked cap in Tobruk. The troops got their own back by using Bardia Bill as a urinal. Many months later it was cleaned painted & ended up in the London War museum along with the El Alamein railway siding board. Those last couple of days of the siege were to me very strange, almost uncanny. Perhaps it was that for a change it was so quiet for two days no shelling, no daytime air raids, a couple of half hearted night raids during which we did not even bother to roll out of our blankets. No work was being done, the workshop was empty & nothing coming in for repairs. All the staff just milling about expecting something to happen, but all eyes looking East towards Egypt, the only way Crusader would come to reach Tobruk & end the siege. At about 8.A.M. on the 9TH December on top of the distant sand hills beyond the perimeter against the bright sky we saw in silhouette several tanks of various types & they were NOT German, Crusader had reached the outskirts of Tobruk. We were almost back in the World.

About 10.a.m. we noticed 5 or 6 armoured cars making their way with caution up what had been Tobruk's main road, dodging the fallen masonry, the bomb craters & shell holes. They drove straight up to us, they were S.Africans from Crusader, well you can imagine the cheering, laughter, & hand-shakes etc., they knew all about our hardships during the siege the S. Africans were so generous & gave us everything they had in their cars, what we had not seen for 8 months, fresh cigarettes with real tobacco, fresh oranges, tins of sardines, soup, fruit, ham, spaghetti etc., they said they could not stop as they had to get on with the job of driving the Germans back to Bengasi, but they assured us the Germans within 50 miles of Tobruk were dead ones. At midday a Brigadier from Crusader came to see our Colonel, who later called us all together to tell us the siege was really over, & in a few days time the Unit would be returning in 3 Tonners a long journey (3 or 4 days) across the Desert to Alex.

In a couple of nights time we would have a hell of a party to celebrate the end of the Siege, we were sending a 3 Tonner back to the nearest base & we could order what ever we wanted. The men really went to town as we had never had so much money, being unable to spend anything at all in 8 months. I know I ordered 24 Quarts of Beer & 3 or 4 Bottles of Scotch, the beer arrived & was Canadian Red Cap stronger than normal beer & the Scotch of course was of the best. It was a good party that went on to the early hours. The Colonel also asked for 10 volunteers to stay in Tobruk for a few days after the rest of the Unit had left, to uproot most of the machines in the workshop to be sent to Egypt where they could be put to better use. needless to say the 3 of us volunteered. We said cheerio to our friends & would meet up before long with the unit in Alex., Next day the Royal Engineers arrived with big heavy lorries & a crane, we took most of the machines from the main workshops lathes, drills etc., from my little workshop we took the circular saw, my 18 inch planer & wood turning lathe, we left the band saw which had always given me trouble. The R.E.'S would have a slow trip back to Alex., with the machines. The Colonel & his small staff would be the last to leave in a few days time. He told us the big aerodrome El Adem south of Tobruk used by the Luftwaffe to bomb us for 8 months was now used by the R.A.F., & there was a vehicle park with about 150 vehicles British, German, & Italian. H.Q. orders were that anyone returning to Egypt had to drive one of these vehicles. A truck would arrive in the morning to take the 10 of us to the park but it was not big enough for 10 men only 7, so the 3 of us would be picked up later this meant that we would be on our own for the trip to Alex., which was just what we wanted. We only left mid afternoon after saying cheerio to the Colonel. The officer in charge of the vehicle park told us a lot of the vehicles were bomb happy but he had a team of mechanics & every engine was in perfect condition. He had everything from motor bikes to 10 Ton lorries all needing drivers to get them back to Egypt, he also told us we could take our choice of what we wanted to drive. Strange our choices were all so different, Topper being very posh went for a lovely open 4 seater Austin Staff Car, apart from a couple of bullet holes in the door it looked new, Lofty crazy as ever decided on a 10 Ton Italian Army Lancia,

the last thing I would want to drive all the way across the Desert to Alex., I was sentimental & found the only Morris 15CWT. Desert Bug, to remind me of my home for over 12 months & carried me thousands of miles across the Deserts of Egypt & Libya in the first Desert Campaign. Those of you who read those articles will remember my Morris 15CWT. (DILYS) named after a lovely little black mare on which I had won several races in Egypt before the War. I decided Topper would lead our small convoy me in the middle & Lofty last. We headed back to Tobruk & up the hill to the East. At the top we left our vehicles & walked to the edge & stood together for about 15 minutes looking at the ruins of Tobruk, the harbour seemed to be full of masts & funnels sticking out of the water, Churchill called it the graveyard of ships, on the east shore the burnt out shell of what was once Italy's pride the ocean liner "Marco Polo". To the south 40 metres from the shore the gallant little mine sweeper H.M.S. Ladybird only her stern sticking out of the water on which was a 3.7 A A gun, every daylight raid four sailors would row out & man the gun. To the west the partly burnt out big Italian Cruiser San Giorgio, she was on fire the day we captured Tobruk for the first time in 1940. The town was a mass of masonry, only the Campanile of the little Catholic Church standing up defiant, a very last look at Tobruk & we drove over the hill towards Egypt. as I expected we only made about 50 miles & made our camp well off the road cooked our dinner on a DESERT RAT FIRE, half an empty 4 gallon petrol tin half filled with sand pour in some petrol & set alight the burning sand will burn for hours, thought of before the War it was later adopted by the German & Italian forces, what a Godsend in a land where there is no firewood. I told Topper the next day we should be in Egypt, we had a good run until about 3.30 when Lofty behind me was hooting & waving, I thought he was just being friendly, when a lone Messerschmitt flew over us all guns blazing, thank God his aim was so bad as we were sitting ducks, I signalled Topper the usual drill, he pulled off to the right Guggy to the left, & Lofty: to the right, as soon as we stopped run as far as possible from the vehicles and try & bury yourself in the sand, the plane came back & went for Topper's Austin, which went up in a burst of flames, Topper lost what little kit he had, his main loss was his souvenirs of the Siege. So Topper joined me

in the passenger seat of the Morris cab, we never saw the German plane again. We crossed into Egypt about 5.p.m. Mussolini's famous border wire was either destroyed or buried under sand. We camped about 20 miles into our beloved Egypt but the Desert looked just the same as Libya. That night around the fire we talked about how lucky we were to be alive, all three of us could have been so easily killed. Next day only about 300 miles to go & I decided we would camp about 40 miles from Alex., & drive in the next morning. We had an easy trip & made camp beneath dunes that separate the beach from the Desert, -we had a super swim, cooked an extra big meal as we would not need any more food apart from breakfast. Then we settled down around the fire with a bottle of Scotch for several hours chat as we had no idea what the future held for us. As we sat around the fire there were two things we did not know, one this was the last time we would be in the Western Desert, a Desert we had known better than our home towns on & off for 6 years. Two in a few days we would split up for ever. Back in Alex., Topper who was fluent in English, Italian, Arabic & French was sent to British Intelligence in Cairo, where I reckon he should have gone when War broke out. We never saw our friend again. Lofty & I stayed in Alex., a bit & then moved with the Unit to the extreme north of Israel, to a big base workshop well spread out in the fields between Haifa & Acca. The Desert Wars were over the War zone was now Italy. Lofty & I both asked for a posting to Italy Lofty because he wanted a change & me because I knew when Italy surrendered I could easily get compassionate leave to visit my family in Switzerland. Lofty got to Italy, sorry to write he was later killed at the battle for the River Po. The T.B. germ I had picked up at the end of the Siege (that is another story), came to the fore & I found myself in hospital on Mount Scopus looking down on the old City of Jerusalem which I had always found so interesting since my first visit in 1937. I was told I had a perfect right lung but a big hole in the left one which would need drastic surgery which could not be done at this hospital, the surgery would mean the loss of most of my lung & the removal of several ribs, I could either go to T.B. Military Hospital in England or the British Military Hospital (staffed by South Africans apart from the Colonel

at Baragwanath near Johannesburg, I had over two & a half years at this wonderful Baragwanath, I did lose most of my lung & several ribs (7) but made a remarkable recovery & in a couple of years was back to swimming, riding & jumping. In the hospital I was to meet & to marry a little Army Nurse who turned out to be the most wonderful woman in the world. Strange, when you come to think of it we would never had met if it had not been for The Siege Of Tobruk.

This is really the end.

GUGGY.

A big Thank.You to my little wife for all the years of typing for our Bulletin, & she always made the dateline. On behalf of the Club & myself, many, many, Thanks.

Guggy  
1944

## SWISS CLUB BERG WEEKEND

Who attended ?

With Hanspeter and Thomas I motored on Saturday the 16. September to the Cathedral Peak Reserve. After booking our camp-site, we tied up our hiking-boots and aimed for a easy walk to the Rainbowgorge. Only after walking and talking for nearly one hour did we realize, that we were in the wrong valley. But it was a superb day and we were surrounded with one of the most beautiful views in the Drakensberg. It did not matter walking back and this time heading towards the Rainbowgorge. How relaxing it was, having our lunch near the gurgling, sparkling clear stream just before entering the gorge. The gorge is an impressive sight with two big rocks jammed high up between the gorge-walls. The hike back through the cool Yellowwood forest can be fully recommended.

It started to drizzle just as we pitched our two tents among the freshly green leaved Birchtrees.

On Sunday morning just before five I stuck my shiny head out of the tent and was impressed by the clear starry sky. This led us to agree with Hanspeters proposal, to climb the Cathedral Peak. We had breakfast, packed our backpacks and before seven we were on the footpath towards the Cathedral Peak. Hanspeter was our experienced guide since he climbed that famous mountain a few times before. The grass covered slopes were very dry but along the path we were greeted



by numerous colourful spring flowers and red Protea bushes. After walking for one hour we reached Shermans cave, time for a little rest and a large sip of water. Thomas, always leading ahead of us, still very fit from his Kilimajaro climb this July. We reached the legendary "Bugger-gully" just before midday. From here we had to climb over a rockband onto the track leading to the Peak. I must admit, that I would have felt safer climbing these last 200 Meter to the top of Cathedral Peak with the protection of a rope. On top we were rewarded with one of the most spectacular view of the Drakensberg. We looked down towards the Bell, and northwards we saw as far as Devils Tooth, part of the Amphitheatre and Witsieshoek. Southwards we observed a thunderstorm and lightening in front of the Sterkhorn and Champaign Castle area and the majestic Cleft Peak presented itself right in front of us. After a safe four hour descent we reached Cathedral Peak Hotel tired and very, very thirsty !

Unfortunately the day did not end without an accident. Just outside the little location of Zunckels a silly Pig ran out of the high grass at the side of the road, direct into Hanspeters Opel Record. It was Hanspeters skilful driving which saved us from skidding down the bank. The damage ( badly dented Mudguard and Indicator light ) we reported to the Bergville Police Station. All that Bacon and Porkchops had to be left on the road side because our car was filled with Backpacks !

Finally we all agreed it was one of our most beautiful berg hikes. I do hope, that we have a bigger turn out on our next berg trip.

Kind regards

Walti Grab

## PREISJASSEN 23 SEPTEMBER 1995

Our car smells like a delicatessen on the way to the German Club where we meet with our Jassfriends to take part in the annual Preisjassen.

For those who think that they will not get a prize to carry home or need to strengthen their confidence, a hearty meal could be eaten before the start.

Have you ever heard of having a Jassabend in a skittelalley? I suppose only the banana people can organise something like that. But apart from the heat the venue was suitable.

Soon enough our computerfundi Rolf had his technology set up, but even he needs a connection cable to get the show on the road. The prizes were all tucked away in the cooler box and everybody kept on guessing.

All in all 22 people were looking for a good Jass and in between some healthy joking and laughing. The four rounds played went smoothly, everybody tried hard to beat the opposition. Sometimes it was dead still in the alley, other times you could hear strange words, giggles, unusual names and "gloeggle". For beginners "gloeggle" means every time a match is played a little cowbell is used to "gloeggle" to let everybody know about the good luck. As the evening progressed and the heat was on, plates with appetizing snacks were served. Jassen must be a really hungry game, everybody got stuck into the sandwiches like a pack of vultures.

The computer coped well with all the high and low results - without complaining he worked out in no time the Rangliste. The first three are:

- |    |            |             |
|----|------------|-------------|
| 1. | Marlies    | 4176 Punkte |
| 2. | Bill       | 3999 Punkte |
| 3. | Karl-Heinz | 3970 Punkte |

Congratulations Marlies and well done everybody else. Just imagine out of 22 players 8 were ladies and 7 of them in the first 12. The men might call it "fluck". Whatever it is, everybody had a good time and was lucky enough to carry a prize home.

A thank you goes to Lydia from the Cape to join us for the evening, please make another effort to visit us soon! The same time we thank the German Club for accommodating us and the Swiss Club for donating the prizes.

Every year Durban players are looking forward to challenge the Pietermaritzburg "professionals". But for whatever reason we don't seem to succeed to pull sleepy hollowers out, except two very faithful Walti and Fritzli. It is still to be established if Durban is too advanced for Pietermaritzburg or the other way round.

Please next time all you Jassers out there somewhere - join in. It is not important how well or rusty you play, but taking part and having a good laugh is the main thing.

We meet every 2nd Friday a month at the German Club in Westville. See you soon.

Anni Gerhard

NATAL SWISS RIFLE CLUB VISIT TO GAUTENG  
OCTOBER 1995

I think that all Natal Swiss participants will agree with me that this event was, indeed, one of the most pleasant weekend experience that we, as a team, have enjoyed. To me it was one of those 'go with the flow' scenarios and everything, more or less, did just flow, and smoothly as well. Indeed, we owe a great deal of thanks to the Swiss organisers in Johannesburg, especially those who 'lifted' us everywhere and accommodated us so comfortably as well. It could be a hard act for us to follow when a return competition is arranged!

It was disappointing that there weren't more of 'the gang' along. 'The more the merrier' you know! Those who were unable to come sadly lost out I think!

The trip began Friday morning early 27 October from Durban. Hanspeter Graber and Nick Hames in one car, followed by Jean-Pierre Goerge and Albert Schmid in the second vehicle, 'wended' their way to Maritzburg, where Fritz Kuhn and Phil Stevens came aboard. Around 7 a.m. we were into the long haul to Gauteng. We took a more scenic ride via Winterton and Bergville and over Oliviers Hoek Pass, passed the Sterkfontein Dam and on to Harrismith, where we 'snacked' and rested before continuing. At the Pass we were all nearly blown off the mountainside by a gale-force wind while our President described to us the Drakensberg Water Scheme working! I thought Hanspeter the most generous of us at this point! Being fairly RDP optimistic, I think, he was the only one who donated small change to one of two little picannins at the lay-bay we were at. He obviously hadn't wanted the clay rhino they were trying to sell to him. The other little fella didn't think Hanspeter so generous and wanted to know where his change was to which our President firmly told them to share. How's that for

affirmative action! Only when he was back in the car did he say CHEEKY B.....!

We were in the thick of Gauteng traffic and slightly lost, but near Gold Reef City, at about 1.30 p.m. After a few 'figures of eight' manoeuvres, we made G.R.C. Joburg traffic on a Friday is not to be desired, believe me.

Hanspeter and I talked the whole journey, which was a good thing, because it kept the car going straight! Phil, in the back, was bored with the conversation and went to sleep. His head 'lolloped' all over the place. I think Jean-Pierre and colleagues behind us thought his neck was broken! Life can be fun with the Swiss!

Time flies and we didn't see much at G.R.C. but it was straight into a Tavern to do some thirst quenching first! DELICIOUS BEER which reminded me of the COLORADO and what the 'heck',, HAMBURGER and CHIPS as well.

With full stomachs and what time left, we wandered around looking for interesting things and watched other people. Three of us went down the mine and that was a new experience for me. It was noticeably very popular and seemed to be making millions for G.R.C.

There was some confusion as to what time Rene Burkhalter had said to whoever, that he would meet us and where! Rene, who is the President of the Swiss Rifle Club up in Joburg, obviously did a lot of hard work arranging that we would be well looked after and well entertained up there, for which we thank you very much Rene and I hope you will receive a copy of this bulletin to read our appreciation. Anyway, Fritz said 4.30 and Hanspeter 5.30 and it was to be by a Southern Sun Hotel at or near the G.R.C. entrance!! Fritz was tense and dragged us all out of the entrance early just in case he happened to be correct and as it turned out, he was! It wasn't a hotel

though, but the G.R.C. Hotel sign by the entrance. My thoughts were that Southern Sun wouldn't choose the Booyens area to build one of their 5 stars in, that's for sure! Fritz was determined to find the hotel though and began looking for it behind every tree! Right, enough of 'talking the mickey' now and on with the 'guts' of the story, which is already too long! Hanspeter will probably edit this anyway. Long story short, we finally made it to our various hosts and me in the 'NICK' of time to clean up for the lovely dinner outing at the Kingfisher Restaurant on the Germiston Lake shore. A superb dinner and a 'one man band' producing good music eventually had some of the good dancers demonstrating to the rest of us!

A reasonably early night considering, for me in any case, and we all looked surprisingly fresh at the shooting range at 9 a.m. on the Saturday morning.

The morning shoot was the 'AMKUS' shoot on A10 target, consisting of 2 trial, 4 deliberate, 3/60 secs, 3/30 secs, score out of a 100. Top score in the field was produced by the writer, who, although very proud, is still wondering how he did 92, after doing such mediocre scores in Natal throughout the year! Next Hanspeter with 90, for which, also well done. Natal was looking good! Next, two Joburg chaps with 89 each. Wonders will never cease for Natal! The Swiss targets in Joburg and, indeed, the target mechanisms at their range made target operation a pleasure.

The afternoon shoot was the 'EIGER GRUPPENSCHIESSEN' at the B10 target. No rests as allowed in the morning shoot. Score out of 80. The whole field divided into teams of 3. Natal, with 2 teams overall and Joburg with 10 teams. Shoot consisted of 2 trial, 7 deliberate, 3/60 secs. Two weaker deliberate scores removed. Natal first team consisting of Nick, Phil and Jean-Pierre came 7th overall with total 184 and Natal second team consisting of Hanspeter, Fritz

and Albert came 9th overall with 178. Highest Joburg team score 198. Highest individual score was 2 Joburg chaps with 72, followed by Rene Burkhalter of Joburg with 71. Congratulations Rene! Yours truly, your writer, came 4th with 70!

As was well remembered with our long ago similar shooting visit to Joburg a car trunk was always open selling refreshments and tasty Swiss sausages and rolls.

What a lovely ending to the day in the little club house 'swigging' beer, sipping wine, eating steak and 'wors' while watching the sunset. It was a super sunny day for the shoot as well. Lovely prizes were given to those lucky winners and a medal, still to be acquired, for scores 86 and over. Natal participants also received an honorary Joburg Swiss medal each!!

After a quiet and restful Saturday night, thankfully, for me in any case, we met at Hugo's Restaurant near Kyalami on Sunday morning, where, after some refreshment, chatting and more laughter together we finally bid farewell to our hosts at about 12 noon and began the journey home.

Our grateful thanks go to Mr and Mrs Rene Burkhalter, Mr and Mrs Walter Gerber, Mr and Mrs Kari Schmid and Mr and Mrs Urs Wolf for accommodating and feeding us all and indeed to all and any other persons who worked and organised to make this shooting trip so memorable for Natal.

Thanks to our President Hanspeter and Jean-Pierre for using their vehicles and for the safe drive both ways and thanks to all Natal participants, from me, for being such good company and such memorable characters!

Regards  
Nick

# Sweetness of Sin

Walter Baumann

I have just read in a guide-book that Swiss chocolate, like Swiss watches, owes its world-wide fame to the relentless Swiss pursuit of quality. Praise indeed for the constant effort Switzerland has to put into every branch of its economy, being so poor in raw materials. However, as I hope to demonstrate here, this is only half the truth.

It all started in the days when Switzerland was just beginning to attract tourists. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the noblemen of Europe considered it an essential part of a good education to visit Switzerland at least once in their lives. Among them was Goethe, who came to the country three times and told his friend Schiller so much about it that the latter was moved to write the stirring Swiss national drama, *Wilhelm Tell*. But clearly Goethe had little faith in Swiss hospitality: when he went to Zurich in 1797 he took with him several packets of chocolate and even a chocolate jug. In those days chocolate was usually taken as a drink, like tea or coffee.

The highest authorities confirm that it was known in Zurich long before Goethe's visit. In fact exactly a hundred years before, *Bürgermeister* Heinrich Escher, the 'finest Zurich statesman of the seventeenth century', returned from a trip to Brussels with the first news of an exotic drink called chocolate that he had drunk there. Anyone familiar with the people of Zurich will be able to imagine how keen they were to sample this novelty for themselves as soon as possible. In 1804 Carl Witte, after a visit to Zurich, wrote:

The women in these parts do not have good white teeth. I put this down to their eating too many meals a day, and especially to the many cakes and pastries eaten here. It is well known that eating more than three meals a day has a bad effect on the teeth. It has also been proved that sugar, confectionery and sweet pastries are harmful. Nevertheless you could almost say sugar is the principal food of the people of Zurich.



So there was documentary evidence of the pronounced partiality people in these parts have for sweet things. And what about the business of eating more than three meals a day? When you come to Switzerland you'll be astonished at the number of confectioners' shops here. And they're always full. The sweet tooth is clearly a national characteristic. Why? Perhaps the somewhat harsh climate calls for more calories. Or the national bent towards hard work and efficiency demands emotional compensation. Statistics show that seventy-five per cent of all Swiss women are engaged in a permanent battle with a few unwanted kilos. Good chocolate contains thirty-three per cent fat and more than fifty per cent sugar.

But this wasn't always the case. It was only when Swiss confectioners adopted chocolate that it became sweet and tempting. Liquid chocolate that came from Italy and Spain was originally something bitter, something for 'real men'. Until the seventeenth century it was always served very concentrated, with a generous dash of pepper. For a long time it was recommended as a cure for a wide variety of ills. Nevertheless, in 1752 the Swiss brothers Josty managed to open a chocolate and confectionery factory in Berlin whose wares surpassed all the other sweet temptations the city had to offer. The historian Eberly wrote: 'Everything at Josty's was excellent, the chocolate simply classic.'

The men who pioneered the Swiss chocolate industry in the nineteenth century were François-Louis Cailler and Philippe Suchard. Cailler first saw chocolate at a fair where an Italian chocolate maker was stirring a pot of the thick brew. He was so enchanted by the aroma that he went to Turin and worked in a chocolate factory for four years. Then he returned to Switzerland and in 1815 opened the first Swiss chocolate factory, near Vevey. The original building is still in use. When Suchard was twelve he was sent to an apothecary in Neuchâtel to buy a pound of chocolate for his ailing mother. Later he was apprenticed to a confectioner and in 1816 he built a chocolate factory at Serrières which was powered by a water wheel.

Ten years later Charles-Amédée Kohler, another French-speaking Swiss, developed the first hazelnut chocolate. And in 1845 chocolate was first produced in Zurich, in the *confiserie* of Rudolf Sprüngli on Bahnhofstrasse, which still enjoys a legendary reputation. In 1859 Sprüngli amalgamated with the Rodolphe Lindt company; Lindt's chocolate, produced in Bern, was already so famous that Sprüngli paid one and a half million gold francs for

the secret Lindt recipes. For Lindt had discovered how to make chocolate that melted in the mouth. These recipes are so precious that they are still kept in the safe of a Swiss bank. But Swiss chocolate would never have become so famous without Henri Nestlé and Daniel Peter. Nestlé, founder of what is now the largest company in Switzerland, first of all invented condensed milk. Then in 1875 he and Peter began to mix it with chocolate to make milk chocolate, which was to make a significant impact on the world's eating habits.

After this the triumphal march of Swiss chocolate could not be halted. Swiss delight in sweetness and Swiss ingenuity transformed the once bitter peppery cocoa into a delicacy whose quality and variety cannot be matched anywhere else in the world. By 1890 600,000 kilos of chocolate were being exported annually. A year after the First World War the production of chocolate in Switzerland had reached 38,000 tons. And today? In 1973 Switzerland produced 69,474 tons of chocolate, seventeen and a half per cent of which went to delight foreign palates. The rest, in other words more than ten kilos per head of the population, was consumed in Switzerland. Switzerland leads the world in the consumption of chocolate, followed by Belgium with a *per capita* consumption of 7.6 kilos.

How do you recognize good chocolate? It should have a silky sheen, and most important of all it should melt like butter in the mouth, neither sticking to the palate nor turning powdery on the tongue. And a fine chocolate shouldn't smell at all like cocoa.

Swiss chocolate: soft, marvellously melting, sweet or wonderfully bitter, light or dark, filled with all kinds of cream, fruit, or liqueurs, pralines, bonbons. Bars and tubes of every size — you'll find them at every kiosk in Switzerland. Not to mention all the food shops and special chocolate shops, airports and railway stations. Wherever you are you can treat yourself to a bar of Cailler, Suchard, Peter, Kohler, Tobler or Lindt and Sprüngli. The food of the gods, the scientist Carl von Linné called it. Let it melt luxuriously in your mouth; close your eyes and for one heavenly moment let sober reality drift away. What was it the poet Gottfried Keller said? 'Many problems are first resolved with the tongue.'