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What's in a name?

Most Diviani and Brentini families have an extra name (soprannome) to denote the branch of the family.

You can imagine how confusing it must have been in the 18th century to have so many Giuseppe Diviani's or Giovanni Brentini's. A soprannome probably evolved to help identify the individuals and their family links.

Most soprannomes have been identified, although there are some families that don't have one. A selection of Diviani ones are "Bala", "Franzine", "Zech", "Pocige/a", "Teresa", "Vebal", "Sebastiani"; whilst some Brentini ones are "Barbata", "Giovannitt" and "Giov-Carli".

Looking at the old records of Calpiogna and Campello it is clear that some families within a soprannome group would specifically intermarry with members from another soprannome group or indeed in some cases not at all. Family rifts must have existed even in those times!

Soprannomes are still in use today and an example can be seen in the Campello cemetery. (Vebal memorial).

Ed. If anyone can share information of how these names were adopted, or what they mean please let me know.

Who am I?



My name's Milena Diviani (of the Vebal branch) and I'm from Campello. I work as an English teacher in Bellinzona but I spend most weekends and school holidays in the village.

Our coordinator, Corrinne, thinks that it would be useful to have an address on the premises for any inquiries regarding the reunion of August 1. 2003. I'll be happy to be of any help as far as practical matters are concerned, but I'm certainly not up to her when it comes to genealogical knowledge and material, even though I'm interested in and fascinated by the history of our families.

I certainly hope that the reunion will materialise and that there'll be a lot of us in Campello in three years time.

Swiss National Day

August 1 is Switzerland's National Day and is a public holiday throughout Switzerland. It celebrates the alliance formed on 1 August 1291, between Uri, Schwyz and Nidwalden and which is seen as the origin of the Swiss Confederation. Ticino (the fourth largest Swiss canton) did not formally join the Confederation until 1803.

This year I will be experiencing my first 1 August celebrations when I will be in Campello. If you are there too come and say hello. If you are unable to attend watch this space in the next issue for a full report of the day.

A web page has been published on the internet to promote the names of Diviani and Brentini. Have you used your search engine to browse for information on Diviani or Brentini?

You can visit the page at <http://www.diviani.ch>

If you would like to submit a photograph and a short paragraph regarding yourself or your family, to me, I will try to feature it in the next newsletter

Reunion Update A lot of you have indicated that you hope to be joining us in Campello in 2003 for the family gathering. It is still a long way off but we want to get a feel for numbers. If you are interested please let me know so that I can add your name to the list and start making plans for the event. So far it looks as if we will have family visitors from Australia and New Zealand as well as from Switzerland and England.
