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## The passport that gets you nowhere



ANYONE can now buy a Swiss passport, and it costs only Sfr. 8 (about £2.70)

But it is a passport with a very distinct difference. It won't get you anywhere. It's not valid for purposes of identification. In fact, it has no official use whatsoever.

The reason is that "Swiss Passport" is the name of a best-selling souvenir, dreamed up by Zurich publisher Verlag am Wasser and

the Swiss National Tourist Office (SNTO).

Like the real thing it does have a bright red cover but this passport is about twice the size. It contains 44 pages (most of them illustrated in colour) packed with easy-to-read information about Switzerland and the Swiss – their languages and lifestyle, cheese and chocolates, festivals and folklore.

In short, it is a passport to a wealth of fascinating facts and figures about the country and its people.

For example, page one of this novel publication reveals that the passport holder is Helvetia, born on August 1, 1291. The place of birth is Rütli (that's where representatives of Switzerland's three founding cantons met nearly seven centuries ago to swear an oath of eternal allegiance). Description – 41,288 square kilometres and 6,314,200 inhabitants.

Under "distinguishing marks" is an index to the passport's contents, from currency to customs, dining and wining, politics and plant life.

Other pages present in attractive and entertaining style the 26 cantons, eight biggest political parties, seven cabinet ministers and four language regions of Switzerland.

There's a guide to the country's coins and currency, and the passport puts a name to the faces of famous national figures featured on all the banknotes (something even most Swiss can't do).

Included, too, is a run down of Swiss

industry, from wines and watchmaking, basketry and brasswork to lace and leather.

Other contents include tasty tidbits from the country's kitchens (try feasting on *Fotzelschnitten*), travel tips for tourists (you can discover the delights of Switzerland by bus, boat or bicycle) – and a detachable eight-frame photo-composite in colour of Switzerland from space, captured by an orbiting satellite.

So that the Swiss cannot be accused of not putting their cards on the table, the passport also introduces the uninitiated to the traditional game of Jass – "a third of all Swiss men and women take part in at least one game of Jass a week, and the 36 cards can be dealt in 91 million different combinations."

There's even a mini pull-out pack of cards, "but if you'd really like to play then you must come and look over our shoulders for a while."

The authors – noting that the Swiss munch their way through a 70,000-ton mountain of chocolate every year – admit:

"People often describe us as sour and say that we seldom look as if we were the inventors of milk chocolate. Appearances are deceptive! We enjoy having fun – even if we don't always show it."

The "Swiss Passport" is obtainable from the SNTO in London. It makes an ideal souvenir for family and friends, and many Swiss companies find it useful as a give-away gift for their business clients and contacts.



The Swiss passport which has no official use whatsoever



Ambassador John Powell-Jones

BRITAIN'S Ambassador in Berne has praised Switzerland for "the excellent way" it is looking after British interests in Argentina.

The Falkland Islands conflict last year led to the breaking off of diplomatic relations between Britain and Argentina, and the Swiss Embassy has since been looking after British interests in that country.

The British Ambassador, Mr John Powell-Jones, gave his views on Swiss diplomacy in a recent interview in Swiss Scene, the new English-language monthly here.

Asked what he considered the major attractions of Switzerland, he replied: "This country has so many attractions and aspects to commend it. I personally have always been most interested in Switzerland's unique political system and its policy of active neutrality."

"In fact, Swiss neutrality was being demonstrated in a very positive way when I arrived to take up my post in Berne. We were in the middle of the Falklands crisis, and Switzerland had just agreed to look after British interests in Argentina."

"The Swiss Embassy in Buenos Aires is still carrying out this function, and we are most grateful for the excellent way they are caring for British interests."

★ ★ ★

ARTHUR Scargill, outspoken leader of Britain's National Union of Mineworkers, has

called for "common ownership" of the British media.

Speaking in Switzerland at the annual European Management Forum in Davos, Mr Scargill told an international audience of leading politicians, bankers and businessmen that he would like to see "a society where people own and control the means of production, distribution and exchange and – in essence – control their own destiny."

"I want for Britain a society which devotes its energies to people and not to profit. I want a society with total accountability which includes common ownership of the communications media, radio, television and the Press, all of which in Britain are currently owned by individuals or organisations with a vested interest in preserving a capitalist state."

## SWISS SOCCER

### Football league tables up to and including May 6

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Lines separate championship leader, relegation and promotion zones.