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BOOK REVIEW

Swisscellany

Author: Diccon Bewes.
Published by: Bergli Books, Basel.
www.bergli.ch

ISBN 978-3-905252-24-8.
Hardback A5 size: 192 pages.
Price: £13.99.

Try your local bookshop, but it is available for around £10 at Amazon.

Swisscellany is Diccon Bewes second book about his adopted homeland and rather than the conventional format of his earlier bestseller 'Swiss Watching', it sets out a mass of curious and quirky, statistical and historical, intriguing and interesting facts about Switzerland. When read with *Swiss Watching* it will give you a good insight into this mountainous country that is remote from the sea – or is it?



Using the information in *Swisscellany* you may be surprised to find out that the lowest point in Switzerland (Ascona) is just some 600' above sea level. Most of Greater Birmingham is higher! Chiasso is less than 100 miles from the sea, whilst Birmingham (again) is almost 70 miles distant from the nearest coast. Apart from masses of geographical information there are details of Swiss politics and of Swiss agriculture. Did you know that although Canton Aargau has only had three Federal Councillors it has more domesticated rabbits than any other Canton? It does not assess the relative IQ's of Aargau's inhabitants though! This is a well-researched book to browse through, not read through. It has masses of

facts and figures presented in the author's whimsical style. Highly recommended as a Christmas stocking filler for a Swissophile. **Malcolm Bulpitt.** ☑

ALMOST FINALLY...

One ICN among others

Bryan Stone



SBB Class 500 ICN "Grock" at Biel. Photos: Bryan Stone

SBB have 44 Class 500 popular and successful ICN tilting trains, originally bought for the winding routes along the Jura, and today also on the Gotthard. One of these, 500 037, deserves a second glance. The front has been painted to incorporate its features into a clown's eyes and mouth, carried either side into a figure on a tightrope. The name carried is 'Grock', commemorating the one called the best clown of all time, a little man born in Kanton Bern in 1880 and who died in 1959. Grock became

famous throughout the western world, and lived from 1914 to 1924 in Britain, often appearing at the London Coliseum as well as in many circuses. His was a clown's story of laughter, grievous loss, both personal and financial, and again fortune and fame. The 500s are all named after Swiss persons, not always great and good, who 'made a difference'. It's worth looking at the little plates in the vestibules to see who is your host today. But only 'Grock' has the face, once legendary, to match the name. ☑