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INTER COMM

CLUB INTERNACIONAL D'ANDORRA

NEWSLETTER/BUTLLETÍ INFORMATIU



VOL. 2 - No. 1 - AUTUMN/TARDOR 1992

CLUB INTERNACIONAL D'ANDORRA

INFORMATION / INFORMATIU

PRESIDENT :	Su Downham	35 4 72
VICE-PRESIDENTS :	Desmond Allen	36 0 43
	Robert Kroos	31 3 37
SECRETARY :	Mari Carmen Ardiaca	24 7 47
BOARD/JUNTA DIRECTIVA :	Jacquie Crozier	35 9 31
	Brian Dore (Treasurer)	42 8 49
	Pop Goldsteen	35 6 21
	Tony Hooper	36 1 54
	Ralph Husband	43 4 59
	Mini Kroos	31 3 37
	Annegreta Nissen	
	Peter Parkinson	35 3 94

COFFEE MORNING IS HELD EVERY WEDNESDAY (10.30 - 12.30) AT THE HOTEL PARIS-LONDRES (FROM 7/10), ESCALDES, COME ALONG FOR A PLEASANT MORNING.
CLUB ADDRESS: BOX 291, CRÉDIT ANDORRÀ, ESCALDES.

THE OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN THIS NEWSLETTER ARE THOSE OF THE EDITORS AND/OR THE CONTRIBUTORS. THEY DO NOT NECESSARILY EXPRESS THE VIEWS OF THE BOARD OF THE C.I.A.

LES OPINIONS EXPRESSADES PELS EDITORS EN AQUEST BUTLLETÍ INFORMATIU, O PELS LÍDERS DE GRUPS EN ELS SEUS INFORMES, NO SÓN NECESSÀRIAMENT LES DE LA JUNTA DEL C.I.A.

COVER PICTURE BY PAM LACK.

Members are invited to submit seasonal photographs for use on the front covers of future issues.

■ Un Club per a gent de totes les nacionalitats que viuen al Principat. Actualment hi ha membres de 25 nacionalitats. En aquesta varietat de membres la llengua més comuna és l'anglès. L'objectiu principal del Club és reunir a gent en un esperit d'amistat i companyonia. El Club ofereix als membres l'oportunitat de conèixer-se socialment i/o a través de les diferents activitats que els Grups organitzen.

■ A Club for people of all nationalities living in the Principality. Membership now covers some 25 nationalities. With this diversity the major common language is English. The main aim of the Club is to bring people together in a spirit of friendship and comradeship. The Club offers members the opportunity to meet socially and/or through the many diverse activities to be found in the Groups.

■ Un Club pour personnes de toutes les nationalités qui habitent dans la Principauté. Actuellement il y a des membres de 25 nationalités différentes. Parmi cette variété de membres la langue la plus commune est l'anglais. L'objectif principal du Club est de réunir les personnes dans un esprit d'amitié et camaraderie. Le Club offre aux membres l'opportunité de se connaître socialement à travers des différentes activités que les Groupes organisent.

INTERCOMM

CLUB INTERNACIONAL D'ANDORRA

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 1992

EDITORS : Jacquie Crozier and Tony Hooper

EDITORIAL

Aquest exemplar marca el començament del nostre segon any amb el nou format. Durant la R.G.A. van sorgir dubtes sobre la possibilitat de poder continuar amb el butlletí exactament com abans. Sembla que no podrem obtenir el mateix nivell de publicitat donat que algun dels nostres anunciants ens han retirat el seu suport, encara que per altra part, estem contents que molts d'ells segueixin amb nosaltres i hem estat de sort en trobar un número considerable de nous anunciants. Tal i com vam dir en el nostre primer número, depenem d'aquests anunciants per poder produir aquest tipus de revista; per tant, i sempre que pugueu, doneu-los el vostre suport.

Vam estar molt decebuts amb la participació a la R.G.A. amb només 28 socis presents. Recordeu que durant aquesta reunió general anual es prenen decisions que us poden afectar a tots vosaltres. Trobareu un informe sobre la mateixa en l'apartat «Notícies de la Junta».

Hem d'expressar la nostra preocupació sobre la situació en que es troben els Grups dins el Club. Molts d'ells ara compten amb molt pocs participants, i desapareixeran a no ser que es produeixi un canvi en un futur pròxim. El Grup d'Art, amb una mica d'ajuda del Grup de Teatre, continua llogant el seu estudi, esperant que a la tardor es vegi un augment d'interès. La Jackie Richards ens informa que no continuarà portant el Grup de Dansexercici. Això es deu en part a motius personals, però també començava a preocupar-la que alguns dels membres només participessin a intervals infreqüents, corrent el perill de lesionar-se. El Grup de Llengües només pot sobreviure si continua associat amb l'Escola de Llengües, i aquest acord es trobarà en perill si no rebem més suport. Aquest Butlletí Informatiu també necessita el vostre suport i col.laboració. Sempre estem contents de rebre articles, històries, cartes, suggeriments i qualsevol cosa que vulgueu oferir. Doncs, si us plau, poseu el bolígraf sobre el paper i deixeu-nos conèixer les vostres opinions, comentaris i interessos.

EDITORIAL

This issue marks the start of our second year with the new format. Doubts were expressed at the A.G.M. that we would be able to continue exactly as before since there seemed to be a possibility that we would be unable to obtain the same level of advertising. Some of our original advertisers have withdrawn their support but we are pleased that many have continued with us and we have been fortunate to find a number of new advertisers. As we said in the first issue we are dependent on these advertisers to be able to produce this standard of magazine, so please, whenever possible, please give them your support.

We were very disappointed by the response to the A.G.M. with only 28 members present. Remember, decisions are made at this annual meeting which could affect all of you. A report on the A.G.M. will be found under «News from the Board».

Concern must be expressed about the state of the Groups within the Club. Many are now very poorly supported and will disappear unless there is a change in this situation in the near future. The Art Group, with some support from the Theatre Group, continue to rent their studio in the hope that the Autumn will see an upsurge in interest. Jackie Richards informs us that she will no longer be taking the Dancercise Group. This is partly for personal reasons, but she had become worried that members who only attended at infrequent intervals could damage themselves. The Languages Group can only continue by its association with a Language School, and this arrangement will be in danger without greater support. This Newsletter also requires your support and input. We are always pleased to receive articles, stories, letters, hints and anything else that you would like to offer. So please, put pen to paper and let us have your views, comments and interests.

Notícies de la Junta

El passat 24 de juny va tenir lloc la Reunió General Anual de 1992 a l'Hotel Roc Blanc d'Escaldes. Hi van assistir 28 membres.

Durant el seu informe, el Tresorer, Brian Dore, va explicar que el Club compta actualment amb 314 membres de 23 nacionalitats diferents. Una mica més de la meitat són britànics, seguits pels danesos i després pels holandesos. Va fer constar que a pesar d'una reducció en els ingressos, degut a la introducció de la tarifa familiar amb reducció de preu, i després d'haver alterat la data de renovació de les subscripcions –ara és vàlida per un any des que s'entra a formar part del Club–, les finances del Club es troben en una base sòlida degut a l'acció presa per la Junta de reduir despeses. No es va anticipar que hi hagués d'haver un augment en les subscripcions per al 1993.

Es va demanar al Club que presentés una demanda de subvenció a Govern, però fins ara no s'ha rebut res. Els membres presents van aprovar una proposta que diu que el Club no demanarà cap subvenció al Govern d'Andorra, però que si n'arriba una, el Club l'acceptarà.

En Tony Hooper va informar sobre les activitats dels Grups i sobre el Butlletí Informatiu. Durant l'any passat es van celebrar reunions conjuntes entre Caps de Grups i la Junta. Molts dels Grups compten amb menys participants i manca de suport. Només dos grups continuen utilitzant els serveis de l'edifici del Comú d'Escaldes. S'han produït quatre butlletins informatius durant l'any; fent front al cost dels mateixos amb els ingressos obtinguts de la part publicitària. Això, però podrà resultar més difícil d'aconseguir durant l'any vinent. Cada edició del butlletí costa unes 100.000 Pta o 285 Pta per exemplar. Els Editors agrairan qualsevol ajuda per obtenir més anunciant, així com articles i cartes per ser publicades.

En Desmond Allen va informar que les activitats socials mostraven un petit superàvit en aquest moment, encara que el sopar de la R.G.A. tindrà pèrdues. Va explicar el futur programa i va ressaltar la necessitat de comptar amb més organitzadors. Li agradaria que es presentessin membres voluntaris per organitzar un o més encontres socials.

La Minnie Kroos, en Peter Parkinson i l'Annegrete Neilson van ser elegits per a la Junta i en Robert Kroos va ser elegit Vice-President.

Després de la reunió es va celebrar un sopar molt agradable a l'Hotel i la Junta espera que l'any que ve hi vinguin més membres.

News from the Board

The 1992 Annual General Meeting was held at the Hotel Roc Blanc, Escaldes on June 24 th. 28 members attended.

During his report the Treasurer, Brian Dore, noted that the Club now has 314 members drawn from 23 nationalities. The British account for just over half the total membership, followed by the Danish and then Dutch. He stated that in spite of a reduction in income caused by the introduction of a reduced-price family membership and altering the renewal dates of subscriptions, so membership now runs for one year from joining, the Club's finances were still on a sound basis due to the action taken by the Board to reduce expenditure. It was not anticipated that there would be an increase in subscriptions for 1993.

The Club was asked to submit an application for a grant from the Government but to date it has not received anything. Members present approved a proposal that the Club should not apply to the Andorran Government for a grant, but if one was offered, the Club should accept it.

Tony Hooper reported on Group activities and the Newsletter. During the past year there had been joint meetings between the Group Leaders and the Board. However, many groups showed declining membership and lacked support. Two groups only continue to use the facilities of the Comú building at Escaldes. Four printed newsletters had been produced over the year; the cost of which had been met by advertising revenue which may be more difficult to raise in the coming year. Each issue costs about 100,000 Pta or 285 Pta a copy. The Editors would welcome any assistance in obtaining advertising, as well as articles and letters for publication.

Desmond Allen reported that the social activities showed a small surplus at the moment although the A.G.M. dinner was running at a loss. He outlined the future programme and stressed the need for more organisers. He would like members to volunteer to arrange one or more events.

Minnie Kroos, Peter Parkinson and Annegrete Nissen were elected to the Board and Robert Kroos was elected a Vice-President.

A very pleasant dinner at the Hotel was held after the meeting and the Board hopes more members will attend next year.

STOP PRESS - IMPORTANT NOTICE

AS FROM THE FIRST WEDNESDAY IN OCTOBER (THE 7TH.) THE WEEKLY COFFEE MORNING MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE HOTEL PARIS LONDRES AT THE TOP END OF ESCALDES. MANY MEMBERS WILL REMEMBER THAT WE MOVED FROM THERE ABOUT A YEAR AGO, AND, BY POPULAR DEMAND, WE HAVE DECIDED TO RETURN. MINI KROOS AND HER HELPERS LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING AT THE PARIS LONDRES ON A WEDNESDAY MORNING BETWEEN 10H30 AND 12H00.

Perfils de la Junta

Ralph Husband

En Ralph va néixer a Londres i es va retirar després de gairebé vint anys a Hong Kong. Ell creu i espera que ningú està realment interessat en el que va passar entre una cosa i l'altra. Admet però, haver estat involucrat en negocis immobiliaris i administratius.

En Ralph i la June, -la seva resignada i que no es queixa mai esposa- (utilitzant les seves pròpies paraules), han tingut tres fills i moltíssims néts. A pesar de les seves arrels a Hong Kong, tots els fills tenen cases i carreres a Gran Bretanya.

Des que es va retirar, en Ralph ha ocupat el seu temps construint cases, interessant-se en la genealogia, la fotografia, i ambulant una mica en el món del vídeo, la música, excursions, la lectura, evitant la feina rutinària de la casa i apaivagant «La Dueña». I sobreviu.

Profiles of the Board

Ralph Husband

Ralph was born in London and retired after nearly twenty years in Hong Kong. He believes and hopes that no one is really interested in what went on in between, but admits to being involved in housing estate administration.



He and June, his long-suffering and uncomplaining wife (to use her words), managed three children and umpteen grandchildren. Despite their roots in Hong Kong, the children all have houses and careers in Britain.

Since his retirement, Ralph has occupied his time in building houses, genealogy, photography-wandering-into- videography, music, walking, reading, avoiding routine domestic chores, and mollifying La Dueña. And he survives.



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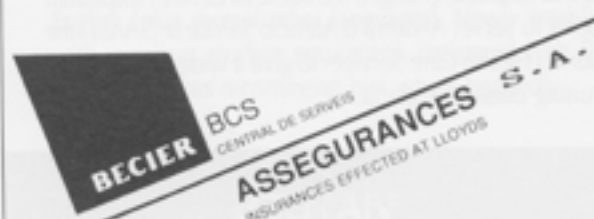
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SANTA COLOMA (Principat d'Andorra)

NEWS FROM ANDORRA

Residencia Row

The proposed quota of 350 authorizations to «residencia sense treball», which is what the majority of English speakers here have, sparked off a lively debate in the July 13th session of the General Council.

Those against the quota feel that while the whole subject of immigration is in flux until the new regulations dealing with it have been drawn up, this type of residencia should be suspended. Last year none of this type were approved and it was felt that the figure should remain at zero this year.

However, the decision to grant or not the residencias without permission to work rests ultimately with the viguers. Some councillors felt that it would be a mistake to approve an amendment that could prejudice the understanding between the General Council and the viguers.

Last year although none of this type were approved, a few were granted by the viguers. This year it was again decided that none will be allowed.

with regard to other types of work permits; 250 extended authorizations to stay and work were passed, 850 temporary ones, 400 for the opening of new businesses and 150 for the highly qualified. 1050 permission to work during the winter were allocated, of which 700 must be related to skiing, with another 350 for workers coming from countries involved with this sport. An unlimited number of permits would be issued to the commuters who live within 50 kilometres of either frontier.

Two amendments were approved. The first was that the number of permissions to open new businesses should be decided in cooperation with the various government departments. The second was that the maximum number of nationals should be employed during the ski season. The third and final one changed the name of Centre Hospitalari Andorrà to Servei Andorrà d'Atenció Sanitària (SAAS) -the Andorran Health Care Service- to give a wider scope when recruiting outside Andorra.

Cass's Sculptures

Anyone walking around Andorra during the last few months may have noticed some rather odd chunks of concrete and metal shapes being erected in unlikely places. These are works that CASS has commissioned to celebrate its 25th anniversary.

All seven parishes have received examples of the work, some on a very large scale indeed, of contemporary artists from different countries, most of which seem to have been erected in the most incongruous position possible.

Dennis Oppenheim designed the ironically named «Storm in a Teacup»; a giant (13 metres diameters) iron cup and saucer, tilted on one side with a frieze of birds around the rim. Placed on the Coll de la Botella where it has been drawing giggles from skiers and tourists alike for some time, it was presented to la Massana.

«Robot in suspension» is the title of the two and a half metres high piece which has been erected outside Prada Cassadet. It is the work of Paul van Hoeydonck. Ordino's objet d'art is a steel circle perched on the edge of the road to Arcalis ski station. One wondering tourist was heard to say, «Is it a new type of ski jump?» It is the work of Mauro Staccioli. Michael Warren created Encamp's composition, which has been put in the Cortals. Canillo's sculpture is by Jorge du Bon and can be found on the Roc del Que. Erik Dietman's eyes and mouths, river stones embellished with iron, can be seen at the junction of the Comella and Engolasters road, by the Madriu river. Sant Julià's sculpture, by Carlos Cruz Diez, has been placed by the frontier. Constructed from aluminium, it is some 20 metres in length.

The eighth piece, «Homage to Andorra» by Toshimitsu Imai, does not form part of this collection, but is «left over» from an exhibition of his work. It is a Japanese garden made with Andorran stones, partly decorated with gold leaf and it situated at the entrance to the Government's exhibition hall.

It is to be hoped that some over-enthusiastic campaigner, aiming to «Keep Andorra Tidy» does not mistake some of the metal pieces for scrap iron! CASS has also been remarkably coy about the cost of these commissions. What has paid for them? The Pension fund?

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BANK TAXES DOUBLED

The legislative commission for Economy, Finances and the EEC has drawn up a bill relating to the 1992 budget, which proposes to double the tax of 600 million Pta. which the banks in Andorra have to pay now to operate here. The new bill, modifying paragraph 5 of Article 17, means that they will have to pay 1,200 million Pta., divided among the banks in the following proportions: Banc Agrícola i Comercial, 15.43%; Banca Cassany, 5.32%; Banc Internacional i Banca Mora, 33.71%; Banca Reig, 7.75%; Crèdit Andorrà, 28.93 per cent.

The tax does not depend on the number of branches each bank has but is based on their declarations of liabilities made in 1990. The bill was discussed by the General Council on July 31. The Commission gave notice of this bill on July 20, giving individual Councillors five days to present their own individual amendments, if they wish to.

The Commission has also stated that a Law on General Indirect Taxation is urgently needed if the country is not to fall further into debt.

It also hopes to reduce Andorra's Radio and Television budget by 80 million Pta. from the proposed 250 million. The Commission considers that 170,000,000 should be sufficient to cover the cost of functioning and pay off the deficit that exists today. Part of this deficit of 114,312,159 Pta. was due to the fact that the body had to function without a budget last year as the budget was never approved by the previous administration nor was the special credit passed to allow them to carry on from January to April. The monthly running costs are 7,500,00 Pta.

The Commission also put forward a recommendation with reference to the tax or levy on electricity and telephones, arguing that since overall telephone costs here are much higher than in neighbouring countries and electricity is cheaper, it does not seem appropriate that the user should have to carry directly this 10 per cent levy and that STA should revise and perhaps reduce their tariffs.

NEW TESTS FOR OLD CARS

All Andorran registered cars will have to pass periodic inspections according to the new Regulations that the General Council approved last September and which came into force last week. Until now only public and heavy goods vehicles had to be tested but now all cars and motorcycles over five years old will have to have a biannual inspection and an annual one if they are over nine years old. The age of the vehicle is calculated from the date of its first matriculation. Public transport vehicles will have to be inspected every six months. A table has been drawn up giving the «test-by» dates. For example, car numbers between 15,000 and 20,000 must take their first test before 31.03.93, while those between 29,001 and 30,000 have until 31.09.94 before they need be tested.

J. CROZIER

English Speaking Services :

1. Sant Julià - Medical Services

(a) Dr. Thierry Boude, Casa Molines, Sant Julià, phone: 42 7 24. In partnership with Dr. (Mrs) Roser Battle. He understands well, provided you take it slowly. Spoken English is reasonably good. Unfortunately she has no English, nor does the receptionist!

(b) Dr. Meritxell Fiter has accepted the position of General Health Director in the new Government. Dr. Fiter will continue to run her practice but part of her work will be assumed by Dr. Enric López Puente, who understands English. Dr. Palau 44, Sant Julià, phone: 41 2 90.

2. Dental Services

(a) Dr. Robert Font Saboya, c/ Prat de la Creu, 96, Edif. Sucarà 1r, 3a, phone: 62 4 44. Situated in new building near the roundabout by the Sports Centre, he speaks excellent English (plus several other languages). Newly established with excellent modern equipment, registered with CASS, both the editors recommend him whole-heartedly.

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(b) Dr. Daniel Marcelly. Not CASS registered but limited Cass reclaims are provided (e.g. not caps etc.) Fluent English, French, Spanish, Catalan. Available, helpful and good. C/. Parc Enric Graner 2, Escaldes, phone: 27 1 14.

3. Ophthalmic Services

Senor Rafael at Optica Oftalmica Pasteur, Av. Meribell 77, across from Hiper, corner of Meribell and the road in which the Automobile Club of Andorra is located.

4. Dispensing Chemist

M. Pere Pages at Farmacia Creu Verda, Av. Francesc Cairat 2 (by the Tourist Information Kiosk), Sant Julià, phone: 41 2 94.

Letters to the Editors

Dear Editors,

A very big thank you on behalf of APAPMA to all CIA members who supported, so generously, the Car Boot Sale at Arinsal on 2nd. August. Not only were we able to raise 70.000 Pta. but also found a family to adopt a puppy. Any more families out there?

Let's try and do it again some time soon.

JAMES GLOVER

APAPMA - Annual Garden Party

The APAPMA Annual Garden Party will be held this year at Casa H, La Pleta d'Ordino, the home of Mr. & Mrs. Payne, on 13 th. September at 13h30. Amongst the attractions will be «Live Jazz» provided by René de Knight, Tombola, etc. Tickets cost 4.000 Pta. and are available from APAPMA. Any problems give James Glover a ring on 37 0 18.



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The Art Group

The Art Group are pleased to welcome Mrs. Nina O'Brien, who will conduct a Course in «Multi-Media» for 3 months beginning on 1 st September 1992.

Nina has had a distinguished career and is looking forward to exhibiting her work in Andorra. Meanwhile, she is keen to share her expertise and enthusiasm for art with those who would like to join in.

For information on the course and the equipment you will need call:

Mrs. Nina O'Brien, phone: 37 7 72.

For enrolment call:

Barbara Melville, phone: 36 3 80 or

Sonia Omar, phone: 37 6 31 (or coffee mornings, Wednesday).

Subscription per month: 1,000 Pta for CIA members
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Place: The Studio, 48, Baixada del Moli
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The Subscriptions is limited due to space available in the Studio.

Nina (Nighat) O'Brien

Many artists have travelled widely but few have lived and painted in such diverse environments. The impact of these varied cultures has left at times subtle and at times dramatic impact on her style. The charm of Catalunya, and Andorra in particular, was immediate on her first visit in 1987. She returns now to Andorra to live and add to her canvas evolved from years in the United States, East Africa, Europe, Arabia, the Far East and the Indian Sub Continent.

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A British Commonwealth Award winner and Ford Foundation Scholar for an M.S. Degree in Related Art from the University of Minnesota, U.S.A., a Gold Medalist M.A. in Fine Arts and an ex Professor, Head of Art Department, her life is devoted to art and the furthering of it.

Artist, academic, interior designer, Nina is best known for her oil paintings and water colours of which she is a prolific producer. Ranging from explosive expressionism to stark realism, she strives to find new horizons in form and colour. She has an insatiable urge to paint and exhibit wherever she may be.

She typically forms, leads and advises (advises as opposed to teaching forced, rigid concepts) a group of artists with abilities ranging from beginner to advanced working in multi media. Men and women are most welcome. Her «star» in the recent Texas group was a retired male geophysicist who had never even thought of wielding a brush, whereas the equivalent in Kenya was the wife of an ambassador who had always «dabbled» in painting.

Ornithological & Natural History Group

In collaboration with the Associació per a la Defensa de la Natura (ADN), the first season's work on the Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Andorra has been completed. The main surveying team was made up of three ADN and three Naturalist Group members. The task of walking an eventual 502, one square kilometre areas is a daunting prospect, particularly when parts of Andorra are not easily accessible. During the first season 128. squares were covered, well on target to complete the survey by the 1996 season. No field team was ever wetter or colder as the lovely weather of early May became a summer no-one will wish to remember; thank heavens for ski area restaurants which are open in summer.

As this issue goes to press the Car Boot Sale will have taken place. The lack of environmental control in Andorra provides a good deal of work for the two conservation groups in existence. While CIA's contribution was for



BARCLAYS INTERNATIONAL FUNDS

John GWILLIAM, the Personal Finance Manager (France) of Barclays Bank Trust Co. Ltd. is now permanently based in Nice, Alpes-Maritimes. However, following a number of requests from customers in Andorra, he travels to the Principality at least twice a year. alternatively, if you are ever in the Côte d'Azur region he would be very pleased to meet you in Nice.

To arrange an appointment for his next visit, please telephone, fax or write to his office.

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APAPMA it also donated a site to the Naturalists' Group, which added its own assembly of produce and white elephants to aid ADN. A particular thankyou for all the cakes, produce and donated items and for the effort made so willingly by far more helpers than we'd hoped. A cheque for 73,670 Pta. and 41.65 FF was handed to ADN for use in projected publications.

The remainder of the year's programme:

- 24th September Ars Valley, Spain
Golden Eagle & Autumn Leaf
8th October Enclar - St. Vincenc
Tree Identification
25th October Burrus Reserve at Orlu, France
Autumn in a Beech Forest:
Pyrenean Wildlife
1st November Vall d'Riu
Raptors
19th November Pal
Mouflon and Roe Deer
in the Reserve

35931 / 42849 / 41279 for further details

Ann MATSCHKE

Andorra International Theatre

Once again we are in the unfortunate position of having to report a postponement in our programme. Previously we had announced in the newsletter and in the last production programme that we intended to present a «Music Hall» in September to be followed by «Pickwick» at Christmas. After much discussion and a lot of thought we have decided to postpone the «Music Hall» until December (11th, 12th. & 13th.) so that once again we have put «Pickwick» on hold.

Why? Well there are a number of reasons for this decision. Firstly, as many of you know, Ron Richards has been ordered to slow down a bit (anyone know how to make him?). We rely on Ron to a great extent and it would be impossible to mount «Pickwick» without putting an excessive strain on him. The second reason is connected

since it is the lack of people who could relieve Ron, and others, from some of the pressures of a major production. For a long time we have been appealing for helpers to come forward in all areas of pre-production work. If you want to see more, and bigger, productions we ask you to contact us and offer your time and services. We are not asking anyone to commit full time, but if you have a few hours to spare you will be welcomed with open arms. We particularly need people interested in woodwork for scenic construction, in advertising and publicity, but also in many other rolls. We will continue to produce what we can, but any progress is up to you.

There is another area where your support is needed if we are to survive. At the last production we only had about 60 in the audience on the Friday night, and only 44 on the Sunday afternoon. A lot of work goes into any production - please support us by your attendance. Those who do come tell us that our productions are 1st. class. You won't know unless you attend!

TONY HOOPER - GROUP LEADER

Photo Page

We are happy to print two photographs supplied by members which illustrate a couple of the activities which have been enjoyed by our members over the past few months.



The local dance group who gave an excellent performance during the Fodue Evening at the Hotel Roc Blanc.

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WHITE WATER RAFTING

A Trip organised by Desmond Allen for members of the International Club of Andorra.

«You don't need to be fit, and we'll all be scared so you'll be in good company». If that sentence hadn't been in the notice announcing the trip I would never have plucked up the courage to join the group; and anyway, I told myself, when you get there and it looks horrific you can always change your mind!

So we set off for the River Noguera Pallaresa at 8.30 on Thursday morning, 2nd July, twenty four rafters and ten spectators who just came along for the ride and for the lunch. We had a pleasant drive which passed very quickly in good company, and arrived in Sort, a small town just south of the Rafting headquarters where we had some coffee and croissants to give us energy and courage for whatever lay ahead. The meeting point was at the offices of 'Aventura' where we were all very efficiently equipped with wet suits, hard hats, lifejackets and rubber boots which were donned with great hilarity, half being put on inside out only to find they couldn't be zipped up - so off they had to come again to be put on the right way - no mean feat.

Next we piled into mini buses and were taken up river a couple of kilometers to the starting point, where we were greeted by the instructors and split up into groups of about seven per boat plus an instructor. Our instructor was very pleasant, and gave us a few simple commands explaining what we were expected to do. On the word 'GO', for instance, we were to paddle forward. «Left back» meant those on the left side of the raft should paddle backwards, and 'STOP' meant that we should take our paddles out of the

water. He also told us what to do if we fell out of the Raft - which gave us food for thought!

Then we were off. We lifted our raft into the water which was pretty cold to the feet at first impact, but the wet suits did their job very well and we climbed aboard. The first kilometer or so was reasonably calm, so our instructor put us through our paces to make sure we knew what we were doing. He had us turning the boat round in circles and doing various manoeuvres when some rougher stretches of water appeared. It was a glorious day, sunny and warm, and the flowers and shrubs along the water's edge were at their best. Birds were singing, and it was a lovely experience just floating down the river.

Then things got more exciting; the rapids became much stronger, and our raft was thrown about from side to side. We narrowly missed rocks; currents took us where they would in spite of our rowing really vigorously, and the raft tipped quite a bit getting us well and truly splashed. A really exciting and exhilarating experience but not at all frightening, and I have already signed on for the next trip!

The trip took about an hour I understand, though it was so enjoyable it seemed to be over far too quickly. We all then went back to base for a lovely hot shower, and then a welcome drink and were able to buy some excellent photographs which had been taken of us on our adventure.

The day finished with a very good lunch at a restaurant just across the road run by a very friendly and efficient family, and then we set off for home again, tired and happy after a day to remember.

Thank you so much Desmond and Annie for yet another really enjoyable excursion.

BETTY PILKINGTON



A real day of adventure as members take to the water and white water rafting on the Riu Noguera Pallaresa in July.

Autumn in Andorra

In July the Swifts leave, in August the House martins, and in October the Crag martins too answer the southward urge; the first to arrive and the last to depart, they'll be back in February and March. One may also see southbound Booted and Short-toed eagles and the occasional Kite. The herdsmen bring their animals down from the mountains and that extraordinary sound in the middle of the night is of bells and of thousands of splayed hooves on tarmac, a tide of sheep surging back to Spain.

After so miserable a summer we deserve a fine autumn, crisp, cool and beautifully coloured. The Arans track to the Bordas d'Ensegur is worth the steep climb for the unexpectedness of its hanging valley and the lovely rowans which grow there. A walk above the village of Sornas offers good leaf colour and lower fields which still produce a rich carpet of autumn crocus. The wild cherry trees of the Arinsal Valley become strikingly red at the peak of the season and on every slope the ground cover of bilberry and bearberry vies for attention.

At this time of year its worth visiting the less well-known villages just across the Spanish border. Crossing the Valira at the Frontera camping ground one may turn right to dive or walk through the Argolell-Arduix Valley, or left to ascend to Civis. Leave the car at the junction to Ars and walk the 3 kms to the village - its poplars are beautiful. These are quiet, remote villages whose architecture and way of life has changed very little in the last 50 years. A very good historical guide to Seu Cathedral and its region, available from the museum (and in English), answers a question I've long asked: Ars, Argolell, Arduix, Arcabel = place of oaks.

There are still flowers to find, the mints, bellflowers and

daisies. Along sheltered forest edges look for the fringed gentian, the last-blooming Gentianaceae of the year, growing, here, at the edge of its range. Around St. Julià lavender cotton (*Santolina viridis*) makes a yellow border to track and road. And on the high pastures of the departing sheep, families of kestrel are attracted by the several hundred million grasshoppers which now suddenly appear.

A. M.

The Mystery tour in June

From all reports everyone who went enjoyed the Mystery Tour organised by Mini and Robert Kross in June. However there seems to be a small aftermath from the trip since we have received the following note. «We ended up at the end of the trip with an umbrella and a pair of white pants. The umbrella was claimed by the owner a few days ago; the pants were not! Please phone 31 3 37 if you are missing a pair of white pants. We saw no one walking off without!!» (Mini & Robert Kroos).

The editors are very intrigued by this request. Please let us know the why and how!

We have received the following request from a member

BRIDGE: Are there any players of reasonable standard, who would enjoy the occasional sociable game? We've tried the Monday Duplicate sessions but find the atmosphere a little too formal. If you are interested please call Peter/Marie Dunkley on 42 3 18.



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New Bus Service in La Massana

The Comú of La Massana have recently introduced a local bus service for the parish.

Timetable :

08h30 La Massana - Erts - Arinsal - Pal
 08h45 Pal - Erts - La Massana
 09h15 La Massana - Aldosa - Anyós - La Massana
 09h45 La Massana - Escàs - Sispony - La Massana
 11h30 La Massana - Erts - Arinsal - Pal
 11h45 Pal - Erts - La Massana
 12h00 La Massana - Aldosa - Anyós - La Massana
 12h30 La Massana - Escàs - Sispony - La Massana
 14h45 La Massana - Erts - Arinsal - Pal
 15h00 Pal - Erts - La Massana
 15h15 La Massana - Aldosa - Anyós - La Massana
 15h45 La Massana - Escàs - Sispony - La Massana
 16h00 La Massana - Erts - Arinsal
 16h15 Arinsal - Erts - La Massana
 18h00 La Massana - Erts - Arinsal - Pal
 18h15 Pal - Erts - La Massana
 18h30 La Massana - Aldosa - Anyós - La Massana
 19h00 La Massana - Escàs - Sispony - La Massana
 19h30 La Massana - Arinsal
 19h45 Arinsal - Erts - La Massana

Perhaps the Witch Doctor Next?

I fell downstairs on my honeymoon!! Now before your imagination starts to run away I had better explain that I slipped on a flight of stone steps and bounced all the way down, mainly on my right elbow. I had actually just visited the gents' toilet, and after picking myself up at the foot of the stairs I leant against a handy pillar box waiting for my wife. Her first words were «Why have you got blood dripping from your right hand?». I had not noticed, being more concerned that all the bits were still in the correct place. The initial result of this incident was that on return from honeymoon, I had to go home to «mum» so that I could have two-hourly poultices on my elbow.

A visit to the local hospital led to me being paraded around by an old school «friend», now a doctor in the emergency department, so that everyone could meet the patient who «had fallen down stairs on his honeymoon». A joke for them; an embarrassment for me!

Over the years I had some problems with the elbow but it was not until 1980, 23 years after the fall, that it became a major problem again. The elbow joint swelled up in a bursar which, when the pressure became intense would almost explode. Frequent visits to the hospital led to an increasing number of diagnoses. At one point I was deemed to be suffering with gout - and I never touch port! The situation was

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made worst since I was due to referee at the 1980 Paralympic Games in June. By May they had managed to subdue the condition a little, but I still refereed with a rather stiff right arm; a difficult situation which will be best understood by those who follow the game of basketball and realise the multiplicity of hand signals which a referee employs during a game. However I managed to survive being very proud to be rated at number 3 and refereeing the semi-final between Israel and France and officiating as Chairman of the final between Israel and Holland. Perhaps this effort had proved too much for the elbow for in August I was visiting hospital almost every day. Finally the doctors decided that I had a splinter of bone in the elbow which had caused the problems since my fall. The answer was an operation as soon as possible. I think that this is the news that the elbow had been waiting for, because since that day I have had no problem with it. It literally cleared up the next day and has never been seen since!

However the wheels had been set in motion. I forgot about the planned operation until I received notice to book in just over a year later. I had enjoyed periods before with no problems so felt that it would be best to go in to hospital and get it sorted out once and for all. So on October 15th, 1981 I reported to a rather remote orthopaedic hospital in rural Derbyshire. The first problem was that no one could find my papers - never mind they would arrive before the operation. I sat around for most of the day until in the early evening I was taken away for a bath. Following this the barber arrived to shave my body. I insisted that I only wanted my arm shaved - he wanted to shave every hair from my body. After a long argument I finally had my way. Next to arrive was a little Indian doctor who explained that he was there to mark the areas of operation. Very good - I offered my arm. No, he wanted my right knee on which he proceeded to draw various lines to aid the surgeon in his cutting. After further argument I persuaded the gentleman that he was working in the wrong area. When he had

finally marked my elbow I spent the next hour trying to get rid of the marks on my knee.

My next visitor was the physiotherapist. «Good evening, Mr. Hooper. I want to show you the exercises that you will be doing after the Operation», was her greeting. I was asked to lie on my back on the bed. «But it is my elbow...» No response. So I obliged and lay back. «Now please slowly raise your right leg until it is about a foot off the bed», was the next instruction. «Why» was my response. She then explained that after a hip-replacement operation it was very necessary to get the leg moving as quickly as possible. Ah yes! But what are the exercises for an operation on the elbow. Another argument and again I won the contest, but by this time I was getting a bit worried.

When they placed the notice about no drinks or food on my bedhead I pointed out that I had been told that I would only need a local anaesthetic, but this argument I lost.

Next morning I was moved into a small ward and told that they were going to give me a pre-med injection. I refused to allow this, asking that I first met the surgeon before anything was pumped into me. About 10 a.m. the surgeon arrived. «Ah, Mr. Hooper, the elbow I believe» Utter relief. At last someone who knew why I was there. «Now let me look at it. The left elbow isn't it. Hum I can't find much wrong with that» I pointed out that he wouldn't since I was there for an operation on the RIGHT elbow. An apology, then an examination of the correct limb. When he said that he couldn't find anything wrong with the right one either we came to a mutual decision that everything was best left well alone. And so after being provided with a breakfast of scrambled eggs - enough to feed the whole ward - I quickly dressed and made my retreat without a new knee, a hip-replacement or even a rebuilt elbow. I was going to enjoy the day, my 50th. birthday.

TONY HOOPER 1992

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ARINSAL

There is an elephant drinking from my swimming pool

There is supposed to have been a late eighteenth or early nineteenth century multilingual phrase book, for the use of the aristocracy and gentry making their grand tours of Europe, containing translations of the immortal phrase. «My postilion has been struck by lightning». My dictionary defines postilion as «a person who rides on the rear horse of one of the pairs attached to a coach or post chaise and acts as a guide to all the horses especially when there is no coachman». the species is doubtless extinct, except for a few ceremonial occasions such as state funerals, openings of parliament, royal weddings, coronations, and the like.

The phrase is therefore no longer useful, not worth translating in this far-end of the twentieth and the not far distant twenty-first century. With what are we to replace it? Something, I suggest, that will be useful in other parts of the world, maybe even to the exclusion of being useful in Europe. After all, there are vastly more people in Asia and Africa than there are in Europe, many more people travel there now and there is not so much need for purely European phrase books anyway. So I propose, as a new useful phrase for travellers, translations of «There is an elephant drinking from my swimming pool». A rare event, perhaps, but in all probability no rarer than a postilion being struck by lightning used to be.

I once watched an elephant drinking from a swimming pool at a distance of 12 meters. Let me admit that I felt a little uneasy, never having been that close to a wild elephant before. This is how it came about.

There had been a Conference of Ministers of my employers, the Intergovernmental Council of Copper Exporting Countries (CIPEC) in Kinshasa, the capital

of Zaire. As usual, there were post-conference excursions for delegates, observers and members of the Secretariat, a choice of visits to the copper mines in the south of the country, to the northern forests, or to a game park on the eastern frontier. I chose the game park.

We flew 1600 Km. east to Goma, on the northern shores of Lake Kivu, staying at a hotel a few kilometers out of town, most of the bedrooms being in small bungalows scattered about the grounds. There were plenty of rich Africans in the hotel. One heard stories about smuggling of this, that and the other, which may or may not have been true. Certainly the frontiers of Uganda, Ruanda, Burundi and Tanzania were quite close. And it must be easy to smuggle goods across an unpatrolled lake when there is another country on the other side.

On the way back into Goma we passed several women carrying heavy loads of wood, to sell as firewood; some had one or two babies as well. Our Zairean colleagues did not even glance at them. We proceeded northwards from Goma, over rough but dry roads, passing through the remnants of a volcanic eruption that had taken place a few months before killing several hundred people. There were coffee plantations too, then into the game park, reaching the hotel towards evening, a large central building with surrounding bungalows each containing two to four bedrooms.

We had to be in our bungalows by 9.30 p.m. Promptly at 10 p.m. the electricity was switched off. «On no account leave your bungalow before 6 a.m.», we were told. Many animal noises in the night. Hearing something, I looked out to see a large hippo eating grass, almost close enough to touch. Lions roared - in the night a few chickens were taken.

Early breakfast, then we assembled outside to wait for

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our vehicles. That was when we saw the elephant, 200 or 300 meters away, ears outstretched, coming towards us carefully and steadily, very likely feeling as uneasy as we did. I observed that the hotel staff were taking no notice of the elephant, so I stayed close, wondering what it wanted. Just a long drink from our swimming pool, that was all. Oh, yes, it came every day. Maybe it liked the taste of chlorine!

We spent several hours that morning, several more in the afternoon, cruising around in four-wheel drive vehicles, returning to the hotel for lunch and again in the evening. We saw lions, of course, from not too close, devouring some kind of antelope. A few giraffes, many hippos, most of them in the river so as to keep cool. There were said to be rhino, but we didn't see any. Once as we were walking close to our vehicles, observing herds of antelopes, a solitary hyena came in sight, running fast in a dead straight line, taking no notice of us, disappearing in the opposite direction; antelope sentinals kicked up their heels in anger or contempt as it passed. Hovering vultures led us to the remains of a hippo, little left but bones and some skin, many morabout storks and vultures apparently enjoying the extremely strong smell. In time this skeleton, like others we saw near the river, would gradually disintergrate, become covered in soil, and disappear, to rot away or become a fossil.

The next morning we drove to a fishing village on Lake Albert, or Lake Idi Amin Dada, as it was then (temporarily) called. The fishers had motorised boats and were organised in a co-operative which received from the state marketing company a fixed price per

tonne of fish. Very good fish it was too. We each had one, freshly caught and barbequed, washed down with Zairean beer. Many of us, myself among them, asked for another fish, not out of mere politeness. The Zairean Minister of Mines was with us, and two or three ministers from other countries, which helped to ensure that we were well treated.

Then the long ride back to Goma, hot, not too comfortable, dusty, but who cared amid that splendid scenery of savannah and mountains? An excellent dinner and breakfast at the hotel, then to the airport. While we waited the cargo space was filled up with fruit and vegetables. Someone said they belonged to the Minister, who would sell them in Kinshasa at a large profit. Perhaps so, in Zaire you never know for sure.

On the way back we stopped for a couple of hours in Kisangani, formerly Stanleyville, visited by the writer Joseph Conrad in September 1890, the voyage transformed and dramatised into the long story «Heart of Darkness». We stayed long enough for a speech by the Minister and a drive around the town. Then the flight on to Kinshasa, to the insulated splendours of the International Hotel. I made a few purchases in Kinshasa, an ivory head and two masks. Then and on other visits I met some interesting people, among them several of the most magnificently beautiful women that I have seen anywhere. But that's another story. I have an enduring love-hate relationship with Zaire.

PETER PARKINSON 1992

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Gascony starts south of the river Garonne and due west of the city of Toulouse. The climate is warm and dry and the countryside open and rolling. Bastide villages and hamlets hold the high ground giving immense views - often to the Pyrenees shimmering on the southern skyline. Perhaps more importantly, the Gers has avoided the weight of foreign ownership and tourism which is now a feature of discovered France. Here the sense is much more "la France profonde". As a consequence, the cost of living is low and eating out remains delightfully good value.

The Gers benefits from the same high standard of infrastructure that exists throughout France; excellent rail and air travel and impeccable telecommunications. City-life too is near when needed; the elegance of Auch and Pau, the bustle of Tarbes and the history and culture of Toulouse and Bordeaux.

In summary, the appeal of Gascony is simple; the people the climate and the feeling of space. In addition, history has endowed the region with a rich

FRANCE

INTRODUCING THE GERS

The Heart of Ancient Gascony



heritage of fine architecture and parkland. The attraction to own a property in France is seldom a matter of capital appreciation or investment return, although both are increasingly valid rationales. To own a home in France is much more an affair of the heart. And when the heart is touched by an entrancing old doorway, the magic of noble old beams or mellow "vieilles pierres", a new affair has already begun.

AUCH, ELEGANT CAPITAL OF THE GERS

West of Toulouse by 77 kms, Auch (pronounced "osh") is a classic French provincial town, also by tradition the capital of Gascony. Its population of just 25,000 are proud guardians of a remarkably well preserved heritage.

The wealth of architecture from the middle ages and 18th century give Auch its feeling of elegance and intimacy. The 15th century cathedral and prefecture buildings, floodlit at night, dominate the skyline and are linked with the river Gers below via the "Monumental Stairway" on which d'Artagnan's statue stands guard halfway.

Stroll in the narrow alleys adjoining the cathedral and past the half-timbered 15th century Syndicat d'Initiative. In summer visit the Maison de Gascogne displaying a cornucopia of regional produce, then relax in the pavement cafés by the ornamental fountains and when hungry treat yourself to the best of Gascon cuisine chez André Daguin, Claude Laffite, or one of their many confrères.

CLIMATE IN GASCONY

- Warm, sunny and temperate, 12° C yearly average.
- Long, hot summers, temperatures 20 - 35° C.
- Pure still air, absence of any prevailing wind.
- Exceptionally mild and sunny autumn season.
- Some winter frosts, rare snow.

• GOLF • THE PYRENEES • THE ATLANTIC •

The Gers offers all the usual country pursuits, tennis, walking, riding, swimming, windsurfing, fishing and shooting. Golf too, is well established in the department with three 18-hole courses and three 9-hole courses.

Further afield, the central Pyrenees has majestic mountain scenery for summer walking and in winter a choice of extensive ski resorts, scarcely more than an hour's drive away. At two hours' distance are the endless white Atlantic coast beaches around the fashionable resorts of Biarritz and St Jean de Luz.

GETTING TO THE GERS

By road :

channel ports, A 10 auto-route to Bordeaux, A 62 to Agen, N 21 to Auch.
eg : St Malo to Auch 480 miles, around 9 hrs driving. Alternatively via N 20 to Limoges - Montauban, D 928 to Auch.



By rail :

TGV to Bordeaux, Agen and Toulouse. Local train to Auch.

By air :

Toulouse, 3 daily scheduled flights - BA & AF (HRW) and Dan Air (GTW)
Tarbes, Weekly flights - (Sat) Dan Air, (Mon) Arena Travel.
Bordeaux, 2 daily scheduled flights - BA & AF.



Ian Purslow started in property after a short service commission in the British Army. He co-founded a leading property company in Andorra in the Pyrenees. After twenty years of experience in taking care of the needs of British and expatriate clients, he moved to the Gers in South West France and now specialises in the sale of the fine old country houses of Gascony.

For further information :

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Poetry Page

We have received a selection of poems written by a member, Rina Vardi. The three selected for publication in this issue give a vivid picture of Andorra 1992.

ANDORRA

Mountain peaks and deep valleys
rugged rocks rub shoulders with slate plates
flowers bloom alongside trees
waterfalls and rivers.

Winding roads and blind corners
clumps of buildings
Man about his life
in bosom of nature.

IN SEARCH OF SUMMER 1992

Months of snow followed by periods of rain.
New buds of leaf and flower showed signs of life.
Temperatures upped the scale.
Piles of clothing peeled off.
Spring was here!
Time for renewal!

Day old calves in green meadows tried to balance on
frail legs.

Newly born foals sucked their milk.

Colts followed their mothers learning the ways of the
world.

Fields and mountains turned their face into the sun
bringing homage of glorious colours
of Red, White and Blue, Yellow and Mauve.

Fiestas and flowers to celebrate life and the coming of
summer.

Suddenly;
Skies have grayed again,
Temperatures scaled down,
Rain all over,
Snow on the mountains,
Layers of clothes out of their cupboards,
Has heaven forgotten the order of things?
Has heaven skipped a season?
Has heaven skipped SUMMER?

THE COMING OF SUMMER 1992

(a sequel to 'In search of Summer 1992')

The summer arrived
like an after-thought,
for the gestation period was long;

Shivering in the extended cold,
we raised our eyes to see the grey skies,
the new white beards on top of mountains.

Our hearts cried with the falling rain,
our souls searched for a ray of sun,
for we blossomed within.

But Heaven has not forgotten,
not us and not summer.
It just played a game...

For, maybe just to say;
Don't take me for granted!
Don't pre-empt my moves!

RINA VARDI - © 1992

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KAREN HADDEN IN ENGLISH

New-Style Hair Care

Have you got a hair problem? Or do you have problems with your hair? Now help is at hand! At Perruqueria Elegants in La Massana (the new hairdressers) they have this fantastically fascinating laser machine which will help you with most of your problems - from a serious one like alopecia to the normal problems of greasy hair, dandruff, split ends and tired hair (the effects of colouring and perming).

The machine works on the principle that light, in different wavelengths and colour, causes different chemical reactions within the skin, and it has a positive effect on the blood capillaries. When directed to the skin this red laser penetrates to the right depth to reach the blood vessels. This improves the blood supply and with it the flow of nutrients and oxygen to the growing hair roots.

I was asked to be a guinea pig to try out the machine. I had my hair washed and a specific cream was applied. I was put under what looked like a hair dryer. I felt absolutely nothing - there is no sound and no other sensation. The treatment takes about 20 minutes. After the first session there was very little change, but after the second my hair did feel softer, and a friend commented how my hair shone. After the third treatment my hair looked very much better and was certainly a lot more bouncy.

Depending on hair condition 3 or 4 weekly treatments are advisable followed by a monthly maintenance. So come on ladies, and gents, give yourself a treat. And as a bonus the first treatment is FREE!

SHEILA HOOPER

A STOP PRESS PLEA FROM THE DRAMA GROUP

I would like to make an appeal to all members on behalf of the Andorra International Theatre, the Drama Group of the C.I.A. In the report to be found on an earlier page I have mentioned some of our problems. These of course still exist, and we will welcome any new faces in any capacity.

But since I wrote that report our problems have increased dramatically.

On August 10th, I was informed that the storage space which we had been using at Arinsal for over a year was no longer available and would I arrange for it to be moved immediately. Anyone who has watched our shows and/or has been involved with amateur dramatics will realise that we have collected together quite a lot of scenery and props. Now suddenly I had to find somewhere new for storage. After some discussion I was given until mid-September to move, which gave a little breathing space. Through the good offices of two of our members I found space on a reasonably extended period for the stage extension and associated woodwork, and a temporary placement for the actual scenery flats in a garage until the end of September (although there might be some extension on this date). We hope to move the rest - mostly stock wood for new scenery - in the near future into semi-permanent spaces.

The problem is that we have no permanent home for most of this equipment, and with the loss of the facility at Arinsal we have no room for painting scenery. Unless we find more space, of a more permanent nature, much of our equipment will be lost. I am appealing to you, the members of the C.I.A., for information about suitable storage facilities. A large garage would be very suitable - and we are prepared to pay a rental if it is within our means. Please put your thinking caps on and try to help us - remember you gain enjoyment from our efforts and these will be curtailed if we lose our scenery.

TONY HOOPER, GROUP LEADER. TEL.: 36 1 54.

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FRANCOPHILE

I have lived in France, at least part time, for twenty years, since 1972, and I have no intention of going back to live in the United Kingdom. I am one of those fortunate people who live in Andorra as well, but it isn't the same. I am very much part of the British community, but I still feel like an expatriate, not like a real inhabitant of Andorra. That is in no sense a complaint, I can fully understand why the Andorran authorities, with such an overwhelming majority of foreigners, have to emphasise the distinction of being an Andorran citizen, to preserve the individuality of the country.

But France is different, foreigners of all nationalities are only a small percentage of the total population, and many of us are citizens of other countries in the European Community. The United Kingdom remains my «patrie», the country of my ultimate allegiance, of which I am still proud to be a citizen, to hold its passport. But France has become my «pays», the country that feels like home. I love to visit England, my daughter and my grandsons live there, as do many friends and relatives, and I still retain abiding links to my universities, Cambridge and London.

I suppose my Francophilia must date back to 1938 when my mother, sister and I, together with mother's sister and her son, had a holiday in Brittany. We went for two weeks and stayed for four, starting quite high on the scale of hotels and moving down to make the money last longer. At one hotel, if you wanted a bath, you had to ask for the key of the bathroom; after two days they said we could keep it, very few other people wanted it. The French have changed, they are much more cleanly now.

Doing «A» levels at school in 1942 I added French to the other four, two mathematics and two science subjects, not at all useful for university entrance, but I was determined to do it and wouldn't take no for an answer. I went to France again in 1949, after I had taken my degree at London University, and on return from France I registered for a Ph. D. in French History, specifically a study of «The Economic and Political Policies of Napoleon III». It did not seem a very logical follow-up to first degrees in engineering and economics, so I had to use all my persuasive powers to be allowed to do it. During the interview there came what I knew was the crucial question, «Tell me, Mr. Parkinson, do you want to do this because it will be useful in your work, (let me say that my economics degree and this

unfinished Ph. D. were done by evening study), or are you doing it purely out of interest?».

I knew the required answer - that it was completely useless - and so gave it to them. I was in. My answer wasn't completely the, because the project was useful, a case study in how to tame revolution and turn it into something useful, which has helped me to understand and predict many of the political changes in Europe in the past forty years. The Ph. D. wasn't finished, in part because I came to the conclusion that Napoleon III didn't have policies, only a political philosophy with very imperfect connections to his economic and political policies and actions. Paris bears the marks still, all those marvellous long boulevards, the visible presence of the will of Napoleon III being exceeded, in my opinion, only by that of Louis XIV.

My Francophilia remained, strengthened by my numerous visits, especially to Paris, in the 1950's and 1960's. I remember realising, with a slight sense of shock, that I knew the art galleries and museums of Paris better than I knew those of London, this at a time when I was living in that city.

Then at last in 1972 came the opportunity of a job in Paris - let me admit that I had seen the coming opportunity five years earlier and had worked carefully to make sure that it happened. But it was still pleasant that everything worked so smoothly. I soon found a flat in Paris, owned by a Resistance heroine of Lancastrian origin like myself.

No west-end Parisian, as I became, feels happy until he has a «résidence secondaire» for weekends and holidays. I soon found mine in Beaumont-le-Roger, about 120 km, west of Paris and 50 km. south of Rouen. When William of Normandy invaded England in 1066, Roger of Beaumont stayed behind in Normandy as the Chairman of the Council of Regency in the absence of the Duke. Why did I choose Beaumont? Well that is yet another future story. I bought a large rambling, somewhat ramshackle house, with something about it that appeals to Anglo-Saxons, as widely defined. My predecessor had dual U.S. and French nationality, a master sergeant in the U.S. Army during the war. I sold the house, when I retired, to two Chelsea antique dealers, and I moved south to Languedoc.

Here I have gone thoroughly native, French in my thinking and pattern of life, in a small wine-growing village of about 350 inhabitants. True there is another English couple in the village, he paints, and they run a Bed and Breakfast establishment, but they are rapidly becoming more French, though unlike me



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they have not lived in the country for twenty years. I often read in English newspapers, and other sources, of the difficulties the British encounter when trying to settle down in France. Utter rubbish! If there are difficulties it is the British who caused them by not making a few simple adaptations to French ways.

The first thing you do is to go to the Mairie and make yourself known, so that they have all the information about you that they need. Make the acquaintance of Monsieur le Maire, then if you should unwittingly do something not quite right he will call on you and tactfully point out what you should do. There will probably be someone who has connections with the local gendarmerie, acting as a channel of information. Find out who he is and make his acquaintance - if you see him looking at you a little sideways, ask him casually if something is wrong; his answer is likely to be somewhat oblique, but will repay the trouble of interpretation and subsequent action.

France is a state-nation, not a nation-state. The state is very powerful and a clash with it can be very unpleasant. Be like the French, use the local institutions such as the Mairie to defend yourself against the state. The British think of a problem as something to be solved. We do not think that way in France; a problem is something to be deferred or evaded. Do your best to become accepted as part of your village or small town. It does not require a lot of effort, just speak the language, even to a limited extent, and take part in local activities. You will soon cease to be an outsider.

There are a lot of local activities in my village, attended by between 15% and 40% of the population. This summer there has been the traditional open-air dinner on July 14th, and two others, attended by between 100 and 130 out of the population of 350, including many young children who are thus accustomed to good behaviour on social occasions at a very early age. There was a full day coach trip to the Camargue, visiting Aigues-Mortes and Stes. Marie de Mer. We had a concert of baroque vocal music in the local church, Monteverdi, Bach and others, attended by a quarter of our population.

It is a very friendly village, you say «Bon jour» and «Bon soir» to everyone you pass in the street. There is a local saying that people come to Cruscades - they do not leave. I have never seen a better kept cemetery. And there are thousands of other villages in Languedoc and elsewhere in France where a stranger can speedily become part of the community. If that isn't what you want, stay close to the coast, buy a mobile-home or a new flat in a modern block.

For people used to prices in Andorra and the U.K., property prices in many parts of France are surprisingly low. For 700.000 francs, including legal costs, I bought, three years ago, a late eighteenth century house on three floors, ground plan 6 m. by 21 m., a small garden, a lot of good quality plasterwork on the interior walls and ceilings. You can still get a good house for half that price, and there are many superb bargains at higher prices.

Languedoc is a marvellous area for someone as totally obsessed with history as I am. Just 17 kms. away is Narbonne, founded by the Romans 2100 years ago. The Black Prince, son of King

Edward III, came this way in November 1355; he burned Carcassonne, was repulsed at Narbonne, and for several days his army was drunk at Azille. Hannibal came this way in 218 B.C. to invade Italy.

You can have enjoyable arguments with the French about history. If you are British they will blame you for burning Joan

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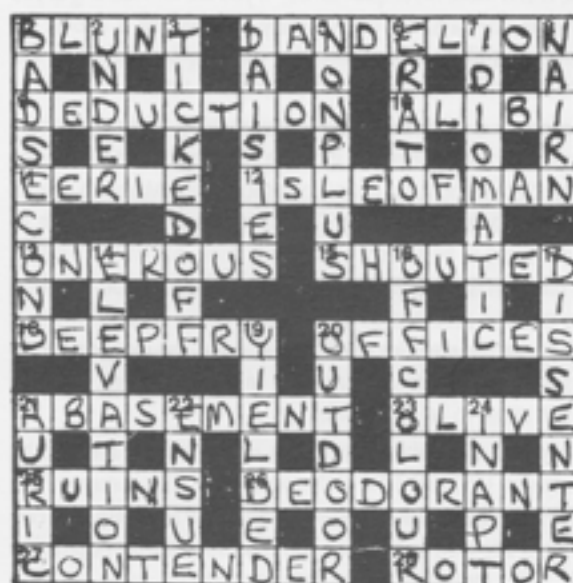
Is anybody able and willing to give my small son beginners lessons on the piano? We have the piano! Please phone Su Downham on 35472.

USEFUL HINTS :

1. Bar-B-Q Sauce - quick and easy.
1 tablespoon honey.
1 tablespoon mustard.
1 tablespoon tomato sauce.
Put in small pan and heat until ingredients have blended. Coat meat with sauce before cooking.
2. Save ends of wine and freeze in ice-cube trays. Then use as required in caassaroles and roasts.
3. Red Wine Cup for the barbeque. A light but agreeable red wine cup is made by mixing 1 bottle of chilled light red wine with 1 large bottle of chilled fizzy lemonade. Serve very cold with slices of lemon and summer fruits.

COMPETITION PAGE

The Crossword in the last issue seems to have been a success since we received nine entries - a major increase on past efforts! So here we are with another from the same source.



Across:

7. Cockney friend in the country (5); 8. Little laughter is heard from this brave wife (9); 9. Resort in a sunny country (5); 10. Meticulous janitor (9); 12. Noble combination of duck and hare (8); 13. Outstanding features of space? (5); 16. Is embraced by a need for something aromatic (7); 17. This is sung over the air (7); 20. A huge shipping order? (5); 22. Vehicle bearing (8); 24. It issues notes, though not silver (5,4); 26. To join, one goes to the capital of England (5); 27. Oral examinations are an important part of it (9); 28. Kind of ribbon used for decoration (5).

Down:

1. Young female accompanist (8); 2. Is hesitant when perplexed? Quite the contrary (10); 3. Keep changing dialect (7); 4. Line of peaks and points (5); 5. Animal in poor health (4); 6. It's said to produce a smile (6); 11. Still quite upset (5); 14. He has lots to offer (10); 15. Eight kings of England were entitled to be called it (5); 18. A little lot of retiring habit (8); 19. It makes a dramatic setting for action (7); 21. V-sign shows one is not in agreement! (6); 23. Injunctive for a sailor to employ (5); 25. It's something to build on (4).

Remember there is a prize of 1.000 Pta. for the first correct entry out of the hat after October 1st.

Send your entries to:

Tony Hooper,

Comes de Rull (1-4),

Sispony, La Massana.

For those who like to do the puzzle «a casa» here is the winning entry from last time.

The winner who came out of the hat was Bob Wheatley of Escaldes.

Congratulations - a voucher for 1.000 Pta is on the way.

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