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INTER COMM

CLUB INTERNACIONAL D'ANDORRA

NEWSLETTER/BUTLLETÍ INFORMATIU



VOL. 2 - Núm. 4 - SUMMER / ESTIU 1993

CLUB INTERNACIONAL D'ANDORRA

INFORMATION / INFORMATIU

PRESIDENT :	Su Downham	35 4 72
VICE-PRESIDENT :	Desmond Allen	36 0 43
SECRETARY :	Maria Carme Ardiaca	38 0 87
BOARD/JUNTA DIRECTIVA :		
Co-Editor, Intercomm :	Jacque Crozier	35 9 31
Treasurer :	Brian Dore	42 8 49
Social Activities Co-ordinator :	Pop Goldsteen	35 6 21
Co-Editor, Intercomm & Group		
Co-ordinator :	Tony Hooper	36 1 54
Committee Chairman :	Ralph Husband	43 4 59
	Annegreta Nissen	36 4 97
	Peter Parkinson	35 3 94

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CLUB ADDRESS: BOX 291, CRÈDIT 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 EXPRESSES 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

QUARTELY NEWSLETTER SUMMER 1993

EDITORS: Jacquie Crozier and Tony Hooper

EDITORIAL

Now we know that our members do read the Editorials! Thank you very much for your response to the appeal last month for more input to this magazine. We have received a large number of articles which you will be able to read in this issue and in following issues. But please keep up the good work! If we continue to receive your input it may be possible to increase the number of issues of the magazine each year. However any increase in the frequency will also depend on obtaining advertising to meet the increased cost. This is another area in which you can help. If you have any contacts who might be interested please have a word with them - the rates are not high.

The attendance at the A.G.M. of the Club was very disappointing with a total of only 20 members present, and that included the Board! We have had a number of suggestions to make attendance at future A.G.M's more attractive. Perhaps you also have a suggestion? If you do please let us, or the Board, know. One suggestion is that we should try an afternoon meeting preceeded by a lunch. Another is that the A.G.M. should be held in La Massana. Perhaps a better idea would be to hold meetings at different venues around the country. Please let us know your views so that we can look forward to a better attendance next year.

EDITORIAL

Ara sabem que els nostres membres llegeixen els Editorials! Moltes gràcies per la vostra resposta a la crida del mes passat, on demanàvem més material per aquesta revista. Hem rebut un gran nombre d'articles que podreu llegir en aquest i en propers números. Però si us plau, continueu treballant així! Si continuem rebent el vostre material, a la millor seria possible augmentar la tirada de la revista cada any. De tota manera qualsevol augment en la freqüència també dependrà de la publicitat que s'obtingui per fer front a les despeses que també hauran augmentat. Aquesta és una altra àrea en la que ens podeu ajudar. Si teniu contactes que puguin estar interessats, si us plau, parleu-ne amb ells - les tarifes no són altes.

L'assistència a la R.G.A. del Club va ser molt decebent amb un total de només 20 membres, i això incloent la Junta! Hem rebut algunes suggestions per fer l'assistència a futures R.G.A. més atractiva. A lo millor també vosaltres teniu una idea? Si és així, si us plau, feu-nos-ho saber a nosaltres o a la Junta. Una de les suggestions que hem rebut és que podríem organitzar una reunió a la tarda precedida d'un dinar. Una altra és que la R.G.A. hauria de tenir lloc a La Massana. A lo millor una idea millor seria organitzar reunions en diferents llocs del país. Si us plau, envieu-nos la vostra opinió i així podrem esperar que l'assistència l'any que ve sigui més nombrosa.

NOTÍCIES DE LA JUNTA

Durant la Reunió General Anual el passat 29 de març, es van acceptar els nous Estatuts del Club. El pas següent és que aquests siguin presentats a Govern per a la seva aprovació.

La Junta no preveu que pugui sorgir cap problema en aquesta fase, donat que els Estatuts van ser redactats amb la col·laboració d'un advocat del país, una vegada haguem rebut l'aprovació de Govern, la Junta té la intenció de convocar una Reunió General Especial per fer efectius els nous Estatuts. Llavors totes les persones autoritzades del Club dimitiran, encara que aquells que ho desitgin podran tornar a ocupar un càrrec sota els nous Estatuts.

Una de les raons de la dimissió total de la Junta és que pel que estipularan els nous Estatuts, referent a les eleccions per als diferents càrrecs de la Junta, tindran lloc cada dos anys, amb un temps normal de permanència en el càrrec de quatre anys. Això vol dir que durant la R.G.E. la meitat de la Junta serà elegida per a quatre anys complets, mentre que l'altra meitat només serà elegida per a dos anys. La intenció d'aquesta norma és mantenir una continuïtat en la Junta.

Mantindrem informats als membres sobre el desenvolupament, i seran avisats amb temps abans de la Reunió General Especial.

NEWS FROM THE BOARD

At the A.G.M. held on the 29th. March, the new Statutes of the Club were accepted. The next stage is that these have to be submitted to the government for final approval.

The Board can envisage no problems arising at this stage, since the Statutes were written in collaboration with a local lawyer. Once we have received government approval, the Board intend to call a Special General Meeting to implement the new Statutes. At this time all the present Officers of the Club will resign, although those who wish will be available to stand for office under the new Statutes.

One of the reasons for the total resignation of the Board is that under the new Statutes elections for office will be held every two years, with a normal term in office of four years. This means that at the S.G.M. half the Board will be elected for a full four years, whilst half will only be elected for two years. The intention of this rule is to maintain continuity in the Board.

Members will be kept informed of the progress, and informed in good time prior to the Special General Meeting.



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FORTHCOMING CLUB ACTIVITIES

Social Activities

- June:** White Water Rafting, organised by Desmond Allen.
- July:** Barbeque.
- August:** Picnic. We need some ladies to help prepare food etc. Please contact Pop Golsdteen in July.
- September:** Trip to Montserrat.
- October:** Excursion (two day) in Spain.
- November:** Shopping trip to Barcelona or Toulouse. Let Pop know your preference.
- December:** New Years Eve dinner, organised by Tony Hooper.
A note from Pop Goldsteen.

By the time you read this 5 Social Activities will be history. During 1993 I will have been responsible for the organisation of most of the events. The job which I accepted was the Co-ordinator of Social Activities. This year I am prepared to be responsible for the majority of the organisation, but next year I will not be prepared to organise more than 4 events. For the rest I expect YOU to come forward with plans and ideas, and at least, HELP in organizing them, or better still, do it all by yourself. There is a list of simple ground rules that will make it easy for you to do so, and of course if you need help you will always get it. So don't be shy, please come forward. To those that have helped in whatever way, my heartfelt thanks!

Ornithological & Natural history group.

- June 17th:** Vila (Encamp) - Breeding Birds Atlas Survey.
10.00 Vila (signposted off Encamp main street "Vila-Beixalis", parking far end of Vila where tarmac finishes.
- July 15th:** Envalira - Summer Alpines / Breeding Birds Atlas Survey.
10.00 Coll d'Envalira (roadside board proclaiming 2470m) car park beside bar to right.

August 19th: Montaup - Coll de Arenes - the more rare Alpine Plants / Mountain Birds.
10.00 Coll d'Ordino.

September 16th: Els Cortals - Marmots and Raptors.

10.00 Els Cortals Restaurant (sign posted right at Canillo end of Encamp).

October 21st: Cortals d'Anyos - Fungi Collection & Identification.

10.00 Jacquie Crozier's house.

November 18th: Castellciutat, Spain - Winter Birds.

9.30 Spanish side of customs post.

Carry - Your binoculars, a waterproof, hat, sweater, your lunch and a drink: passport for trips outside Andorra. Wear boots or walking shoes. Don't forget sun lotion, insect repellent and antihistamine cream if the season and / or region demands them. Any more information contact Jacquie Crozier or Brian Dore.

NOTICE OF A FORTHCOMING EVENT.

22nd. July - Barbeque

Juanito Martinez, well-known guide to the regulars on our various trips, is going to organise a barbeque at the Cortals d'Encamp. Weather permitting it will be an open-air event, but we have an old Borda to fall back on if the weather is inclement. Transport from Andorra la Vella, La Massana and Ordino is included. Bookings at the Coffee Mornings. Closing date: 16th. July.

Price (all-inclusive) 2.600 pts. - non members 2.900 pts.

SERVICES

A couple more to add to the list.

Dr. Hagar is an Ear Nose and Throat Specialist who has spent 25 years practicing in the U.S.A. Office telephone number is 62 8 17. A new Physiotherapist has opened in La Massana. Sharing consulting rooms with the Doctors at Casa Daniel Armengol, Francesc Pasqual Olea can be contacted on 38 7 65.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

TEATRE INTERNACIONAL D'ANDORRA.

As you will realise by the time you receive this notice, the Group had to cancel the proposed production of "The Importance of being Earnest" in early May. After being in rehearsal for some four weeks, our Director, Ron Richards, was taken into hospital with heart problems. At the time of writing Ron is still in Hospital in Barcelona having had a by-pass operation. I am very happy to report that everything seems to be well now, but of course at the moment the Group is on hold until Ron is once more amongst us, and we have time to consider our plans for the future. This incident has pointedly illustrated how the Group depends heavily on only a few people. On many occasions in the past I have sought more members to come forward to take some of the load from the shoulders of people like Ron. If Ron had only been involved in only one aspect of the production we might have been able to continue, but with his involvement in many areas of production it was impossible. This situation will continue unless we have more people coming forward who are prepared to take some responsibility for some aspect of the work. Tony Hooper.

INTERNATIONAL SINGERS

The Women's group of singers continue to meet on Tuesdays between 6 and 8 pm. We warm up by singing in unison, anything from "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" to "Plaisir d'Amour" and then go on to practice songs such as "I Could Have Danced All Night", "The Happy Wanderer" and "Bridge Over Troubled Water" in two and three-part harmony.

The group has ten members at the moment but we would love to have more, especially as we all take off on holiday from time to time. Anyone who cares to join us will be given a warm welcome. And don't worry at all if you cannot read music. Many of us couldn't when we first joined the group. Those of us that wish to, also take singing lessons with Teresa Vidal.

Anyone interested in joining the group should contact Sheila Hooper, Clare Allcard or Pop Goldsteen.

Sheila 36 1 54 - Clare 36 2 69 - Pop 35 6 21

SCOTTISH DANCING

This has been a wonderful year for Scottish dancing. Not only have our numbers doubled, but those that have joined us return week after week which means that we are picking up dances much more quickly than before. Much of this is thanks to our excellent instructor, John Gill. He has taught us a large repertoire of simple dances and, because the regular members now feel more confident, new members are easily brought into the group and helped through the first few sessions.

As soon as the weather warms up we will be taking our summer break but very much hope that, when we return in the autumn, we will be able to welcome even more of you to our happy and enthusiastic group.

Secretary: Clare Allcard Tel.: 36 2 69.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE OTHER GROUPS:

Art: Meetings every Tuesday. Barbara Melville Tel.: 36 3 80.

Bridge: Meeting every Monday afternoon. Marilyn Duns Tel.: 36 1 02.

Languages: Help with obtaining classes. Tony Hooper Tel.: 36 1 54.

PETANCA

This Group meets every Thursday afternoon (3 p.m.) at the Parc Central, Andorra la Vella - weather permitting! All are welcome. If you have no experience we will soon teach you. If you want to join us, or for more information contact Tony Hooper on 36 1 54.

NEWS FROM ST. GEORGES CHURCH.

The next service will be held at 11.00 a.m. June 5th. followed by a reception in the Parish Hall. Note - this is a Saturday, and all future services will be held on Saturdays.

Dates of future services to put in your diary:

Harvest service Saturday 18th. September.

Remembrance Service Saturday 13th. November

Christmas Service Saturday 18th. December.

All these services at 11.00 a.m.

The Church is building up a Fund to pay for a resident, retired, chaplain in the future. Fund raising events planned are a Summer Fete and / or a Barbeque in the first two weeks of September. Any offers of help with these events will be warmly received.

NEWS FROM ANDORRA

Jacque Crozier

Seven-Tier Taxes

(An abridged translation of the article by Gloria Gurdo "Impostos a 7 velocitats" which appeared in number 1609 of "Poble Andorrà").

To live costs money. That is well known; but it does not cost the same amount of money to live in any of the seven parishes of the Principality. A glance at the local authority rates and taxes will show considerable differences. For example, a family of four living in the capital pay in "Foc i Lloc" and services 21,485 pessetes a year, while in Ordino they would pay 4,050, unless they were Andorran, when they would pay only 2,300.

The cheapest parishes to live in are Canillo, Ordino and La Massana while the most expensive is Andorra la Vella, which also has the largest population. This brings in more income but also creates more demands on the local services.

In some of the parishes, residents who have lived here for less than 20 years pay considerably

more than Andorrans and older residents. In Canillo, for example, "Foc i Lloc" is 1020 ptes. for Andorrans and long-standing residents and 4,730 ptes. for everyone else. La Massana adds 1000 ptes. per person to the standard 2,500 "Foc i Lloc" for non-Andorrans. In addition, some comuns apply special rates to those people who make use of a property in the parish, whether it be a flat or house, but do not reside there.

Foreigners who have a second home in Andorra have to pay extra in all the parishes.

A family of four living in Andorra la Vella pays 6.620 for "Foc i Lloc", 10,200 for services and 4,665 for public lighting. The next most expensive parish is Sant Julià de Loria where the same family would pay 19,750 - 10,500 for "Foc i Lloc" and 9,250 for services. Then comes Escaldes-Engordany which charges 17,040 ptes. - 2,160 and 2,100 per person respectively and Encamp with 9,800 ptes. - 3,200 plus 6,600. Although if you live in Pas de la Casa, every family has to pay an extra 10.100 ptes. annually for medical services. In La Massana a family of four who are Andorran or have lived here more than 20 years pays 4,800 while newer residents pay 8.800. In Canillo the difference between the



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two families is 2,225 ptes. for the Andorrana and 5,965 for the residents of under 20 years. In Ordino, an Andorran family pays only 2,300 ptes. for services while the rest of the residents pay 4,060 as Foc i Lloc is added.

In addition, those residents of less than 20 years standing owning a house or flat in Ordino, La Massana and Sant Julià pay an additional rate. In Ordino they must pay 28,300 per flat and 35,300 per chalet; in La Massana there is a fixed quota of 6,500 plus an additional 2,378 for a flat and 3,077 for a house; in Sant Julia they pay 18,750 ptes. for a flat and 35,000 for a chalet.

Canillo charges 16,050 ptes. to those people having use of a property in the parish but not living there; in Ordino they have to pay 10,900. La Massana charges the same as to residents of under 20 years, that is 8,878 for a flat and 9,577 for a chalet and Andorra la Vella charges 11,210 per flat and 18,895 per chalet. Andorra la Vella makes it quite clear that this rate applies to "persons who do not reside in Andorra la Vella but within Andorra".

People or companies who let property, whether, they be flats, shops or chalets have to pay a percentage of the yearly rent they receive in the parishes of La Massana, Andorra la Vella, Escaldes-Engordany and Sant Julia. Canillo and Ordino apply fixed charges and Encamp does not receive any tax from renting.

Although all parishes charge a special tax on second homes owned by foreigners, this too

varies from parish to parish. Encamp charges 10,000 per year for the traditional "Tribut de l'Estrany". In Canillo the rate is 16,050 pessetes and in Ordino each person is charged 16,500 for a second residence. However, if the owner does not declare that it is a second home, then he only pays the 10,900 per year charged to non-residents. La Massana and Sant Julia charge the same amount as they do to residents with under 20 years here but Escaldes and Andorra la Vella charge more. In Andorra la Vella a second chalet is 39,019 and a flat 21,335 plus services while Escaldes charges a flat rate of 36,707 per flat and 58,734 for a house, which includes services.

In Andorra la Vella, Escaldes and Sant Julià, owners of vehicles have to pay a tax called "Tinenca de vehicles". This is likely to be abolished since from this year the Government is going to demand a "Road Tax" on all vehicles registered here. The Government has had to negotiate with the comuns over this new tax, since it means that some of them will lose a source of income.

The Government has agreed to refund to the comuns part of this Road Tax, not less than the average amount they would have collected. The new tax is likely to go up each year, and therefore the comuns will receive more each year.

It is likely that individuals will have to pay more in taxes to live in the Valls. To the local authority taxes on Public Hygiene and Services will be added another one covering the cost of sewage disposal as well as a general property register on new houses.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Dear Sir,

My husband and I recently travelled to England for one week, on Iberia Airlines. The outward journey went without incident but, on arrival at Heathrow for our return, we were informed that our flight at 12.15 p.m. had been cancelled. We were offered a later flight at 4.00 p.m. approx. but obviously this would mean missing our Minibus due to leave Barcelona Airport at 5.00 p.m. After a great deal of hassle, and absolutely no offer of help towards expenses from Iberia either with taxi fares or hotels at Heathrow or Barcelona, we contacted our travel agent in Andorra who booked the minibus for the following day, and Iberia rebooked our flight, likewise, for the following day. The Iberia supervisor pointed out that the airline contract only guaran-

tees transportation from Heathrow to Barcelona, with no regard to loss of connections that aren't by air.

My reason for writing to you is to point out this potential problem to the Club's members when travelling out of Barcelona, and to ask whether anyone has discovered an insurance to cover such expenses, or has a solution to arriving too late for one's reserved onward journey. We were informed that a Barcelona Airport taxi is likely to charge 30,000 pesetas for depositing passengers in Andorra la Vella, and how many people have that cash readily available at night, returning from abroad, or wish to pay that exorbitant amount.

Can we unite to get the airlines to realise that Andorra has a lucrative market for them, and encourage them to perhaps create some back-up to cover cancellations and delays?

Brenda Ross.

Editors' comment: Mr. & Mrs. Ross are not the only people who have had this problem. Any answers or suggestions? In the last resort the benches in Barcelona Airport are quite comfortable!!

Dear Sir or Madam,

We have been members of the International Club for almost two years now, and have found the magazine most informative and very welcoming - insofar as we always felt it was addressed directly to us! Your call for comment came as a timely reminder that I really must write and tell you how useful we have found it since we arrived.

Having been an editor myself, I know how welcome it is to receive letter of praise. However, I also know that letters with suggestions or

offers of help are even more welcome. So here is a suggestion: a monthly round-up of news of members: what they are doing, where they have been, etc. This is quite separate from actual features on what members have done. I am thinking more in terms of "news in brief".

In such a talented and experienced group of people, there is sure to be someone who is writing a book, building a house, sailing round the world, attending a course or conference abroad, winning awards - snippets of information that would be of more than passing interest to a number of your readers.

Anyway, please keep up the good work. Congratulations on a splendid magazine and, again, many thanks.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Shaida

Dear Editors,

At the A.G.M. of our Club in March, Anne Price suggested that we as individuals ought to take a more active part in local life. I made a few brief comments in support. Now I should like to put forward the same motion again, in terms of some specific local activities.

In January all residents over 65 received from their Comu the offer of a Carnet d'Or, giving certain advantages in local and national activities. I requested and received, free, my Carnet d'Or.

Towards the end of April all holders were invited to join a coach trip to Barcelona; about 220 people from all the parishes took part. I left Ordino at 0630 returning at 2200. Obviously the trip, which included lunch, was subsidised since each participant only paid 2.000 Pts. How many non-Andorrans were there out of the 220? Four, so far as I could determine; Stan and Joyce Jones from Incles, myself and a Frenchman.

Since, all the holders of the Carnet d'Or have received invitations to informal meetings during May with the Police, Fire Brigade and the Red Cross, and to a celebration at St. Miguel d'Engolasters.

On the day previous to the Barcelona trip there was a Choral Competition (admission free) at the National Auditorium, nine choirs from Spain and one from Andorra. So far as I could judge, apart from Spaniards, there were about six non-Andorrans present. Those who were not missed some good singing, good dancing by a local troupe, and a lot of spontaneous human enjoyment.

My conclusion is clear. Participate! At national and local level Andorrans are making a considerable effort to involve we immigrants. You are missing out on a lot by not taking advantage of what is on offer.

Peter Parkinson

Editor's comment: Peter makes many good points, but forgets to mention the major problem in Andorra - the dissemination of information. On the day of the Barcelona trip there was an end-of-season "do" at Arcalis I and my neighbours received our invitations on the following day!

This is not unusual. Even if one keeps one's eyes open, very often the posters announcing an event do not appear until the day before. In fact on one recent occasion as I finished refereeing in Andorra, posters were being put up announcing a Euro-Cup Roller Hockey match which was due to start twenty minutes later! (T.H.)

We print the following extract from Mrs. Graham Watson's letter apologising for being unable to attend the AGM because we would welcome readers' comments on her suggestions. Eds.

"...Would you think it a good idea if the AGM was held in La Massana which is within easy access to a lot of members? And another time, in early June perhaps, when most members are back or haven't gone on holiday? Perhaps it could be advertised as more of a desirable social event with drinks and canapés first..."

(There were drinks and "nibbles" first this year. Last year there was a dinner afterwards, which was not very well attended. Another suggestion made was to have a lunch first and hold the AGM afterwards. Comments please. Eds.)

John and Hazel Tanner of Ordino write "(The magazine) is very much appreciated by us - and everyone else we have spoken to about it. The Andorran "news" especially is useful".

(For more current "news" of what is happening or has happened in Andorra, don't forget there is a weekly page in English in "Poble Andorra", on the newsstands every Friday. Eds.)

BARCELONA 1993 - Samia Omar

Pop did it again!! Not only the trip to Barcelona was wonderfully organized, full of culture and enjoyed by everyone, dinner was excellent in quality and quantity. But how did she order the gorgeous weather? She must have heavenly connections. Three cheers for Pop.

Barcelona, before John Gill, meant to me the airport, but now through John's architectural, artistic and cultural explanations and our actual sight-seeing of Gaudi's actual works, Barcelona to me is a masterpiece. Barcelona has been an innovative city, with a strong identity apart from the rest of Spain. In the 1870's it grew its own brand of Art Nouveau, Modernisme. In the airy streets west of the medieval centre are bizarre creations of Gaudi, whose most famous work is the turreted church La Sagrada Família and, on a hillside in the suburbs, the Parc Guell, where ceramic tiles and decorative lizards

run riot. Also in the Parc the Gaudi Museum presents some of Gaudi's handmade furniture. At No. 43 Passeig de Gràcia, there is Gaudi's extraordinary Casa Baltià, finished in 1907 for an industrialist. Dali compared it to "the tranquil waters of a lake". Some of us had the pleasure of seeing the Casa Vicens with its beautiful ceramic tile facade which belonged to a tile merchant.

We then walked to the Plaça de Catalunya where we saw other houses done by Gaudi. All in all it was an experience to remember. Thanks a million to John Gill. Last, but not least, our driver J.R., who usually wears a ten gallon stetson hat (but forgot it this time). He is charming, polite, entertaining, and above all an excellent driver. He also presented the ladies with a pink carnation. Gracias J.R. Many thanks to Pop, John and J.R. for organising a tremendous day full of culture, enjoyment, fun and sunshine. (Thanks also to Val Cruickshank who also sent us a report).



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KAREN HADDEN IN ENGLISH

AN DOVERNIGHT TRIP TO TOULOUSE

Until I went on this trip, Toulouse, to me, was an airport, a railway station and a périphérique. Now I am wiser, and have seen some of the interesting old buildings and odd churches and lovely parks. We must all thank Pop Goldsteen for the excellent organisation, and our bus driver, Juanito, who drove steadily and carefully on the mountain roads, so that those of us who suffer from motion sickness, were not in the least uncomfortable!

The hotel was near the airport, but away from the main roads, so it was quiet, and we could walk around the area quite safely. Those of us who are vegetarians, had two good meals specially prepared for us.

The English speaking guide who took us around the old city, was very knowledgeable about the history of Toulouse, and about the buildings; he was also very amusing. After our two hour tour, we had an hour or more to ourselves; some people did more exploring, some looked at the shops, and some of us sat outside a café, had a drink and watched the world go by. That was all on the Friday. On Saturday morning a few of us went to the gardens. In one park, off the Boulevard Lacrosses, there is a lovely Japanese garden, with azaleas in bloom, flowering cherry trees and a weeping willow, with its branches just dipping into the water of the small lake.

Unfortunately, by now it was raining quite hard, but there was a sort of pavillion, (without the expected up-turned edges to the roof), where we sheltered for a bit. Then we took a bus to the Jardin des Plantes, where there are some huge old trees, all labelled, with name, family and country of origin. The Botanical garden is very small, and did not look particularly interesting. It is not normally open to the public, but I was prepared to wave my 'Friend of Kew Garden' card, if we had wanted to go in.

The main party had an excellent tour of the Aerospatiale factory, the Visitors' Centre of which was found only by tenacious enquiry, by Pop, at various guarded entrances (all marked Aerospatiale). A very pleasant guide showed us aircraft in various stages of completion, showed us a film showing us how marvellous they were and how they hoped to step up production to turning out one a day. She claimed, I believe, the first powered flight for the great French aviator Bleriot, who crossed the Channel in 1909. I imagine what the Wright brothers did, in 1903, in the U.S. doesn't count in France.

We all met again at a restaurant, not far from the Jardin des Plantes, and had a good lunch, before getting on the bus again, for the drive home. As so often happens, being away from Andorra for only 36 hours, feels like a week's holiday!

Dinah and Wallace Baxter.

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FLYING VISIT to the CARMARGUE



Slip out of Andorra well before dawn. Flagged down by the Guardia with torches - always feel guilty even though not carrying the teeniest bit of contraband. Through the clouds, blankets of snow on either side. Turn the corner and are amongst the red-tiled roofs. Mirnosa. Pink and white of peach and pear in blossom. La Catalane merges into La Languedocienne. Umbrella pines appear and we are there in time for breakfast. As we approach, a vast sheet of water stretching as far as the eye can see. The Med? No, an inland lake - Vaccarès - filled with birds.

Little Egret. Great Egret. Black-headed Gulls. Black Kite. Marsh Harrier.

The white horses, milky, submissive, the black bulls of the Camargue with horns like an unstrung lyre.

Grey herons dancing on spindly legs around a cormorant, dealing (ineffectually) with

an eel as long as himself.

Teal, wigeon, pochard, merganser. The names roll off the tongue, as beautiful as the ducks themselves.

Two red-legged partridges in smart, striped vests companionably ambling down a path. Golden brown reeds everywhere. Warblers. Fantailed, willow, moustached. And the coypu (an aquatic, beaver-like rodent imported



from South America) basking in the water of the canals, a silly smile on his whiskery face.

Étang de Grenouille - frogs indeed. Half an inch long and green as emeralds. Urged on by Youngest Member search for rare blue, but simply cannot find one.

Redshank, Greenshank, Moorhen. Coots climbing out on to the reeds. "Looks like guinea fowl", observes Member hungrily. Mallard a l'orange has already been suggested, so maybe time for lunch.



The secluded reserve this time - the grey herons again, hunched over silvery nestlings. Pink flamingoes in a frieze around the lake. Water rail and coypu paddle near by. Marsh Harriers. A sparse wintry landscape now, the trees a delicate tracery of bare twigs against a pale, gleaming sunset. Jackdaws Magpies.

At dawn the mozzies move in to the attack. The birds wing into nest and the birders wing home to the walled, crusader town of Aigues-Mortes. Medieval miniature. Vins des sables - blanc, noir, rosé, gris. Gris? Riz Carmargais, the equivalent of chips with everything. Garlic with everything.

Sleep? Where did that go as we tumble out of bed. Pre-breakfast birding? Whose idea was that? Out into the cold, grey mist, envying the faint-hearted, snug in bed for another hour, Gulls shrieking and squabbling up and down the canal. Martin, swallow darting. Dozens of little birds, linnet, goldfinch, bunting, sparrow, on the lines like musical



notes.

After breakfast to the reserve where injured birds are reared and cared for. Youngest member sets off for stables, laden with sugar lumps donated from previous evening's after dinner coffee.

Awe-struck by the immense wing span and fiercely bright eye of raptors usually only seen at great distance. Silenced by the sheer bulk and beauty of the Eagle Owls, Europe's largest owl.

More flamingoes, palest pink, doing impossible contortions.



Storks overhead - an embarras de richesse around us. Don't know what to look at first. Did the stork bring all this? Into the hides - silent except for the whirr of wings as birds re-arrange patterns on sky and water. Getting blasé now - more Marsh Harriers.



On to Les Saintes-Maries to La Digue - the seawall - really the Med, this time, for lunch. After don macs and launch out in teeth of howling gale. Intrepid Member, who normally winters in shirt-sleeves, is spotted wearing a sweater! Console oneself that walk after lunch is very healthy. Rewarded with Lesser Flamingoes and a flock of Mediterranean gulls. Up through Arles to Les Alpilles, a jumble of grey rocks, to wait patiently in the gathering gloom in hope of seeing the Eagle Owl in flight.




Next morning to the salt pans and the beach. Quieter now - avocet, still, godwit, plover. Mallard everywhere in a hurry. Cormorant with his wings hung out to dry. Getting warmer as the day goes on and we pull away leaving ponds and marshes in a shimmering haze.


Good-bye flamingoes, gulls. Goodnight, eagle owl.


Written and illustrated by Barbara Melville.

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Do You Want to Get into (Star) Shape for Summer?

Do you enjoy jogging a couple of kilometres before breakfast? Tennis, cross-country skiing, mountain climbing? Or is turning over the pages of a good novel while sitting comfortably in an arm-chair your favourite exercise? If the latter, but you feel you ought to take some exercise or lose some weight, then perhaps Star Studios might be just what you are looking for.

Star Studios is a "gym with a difference" where you can lie comfortably on a series of exercise machines and let them do most of the work: circling your legs, raising them, twisting your waist and pummelling your hips or you can let the machines be the starting point for more strenuous exercises. It all depends on your health and fitness which the two young women who run the studio check very carefully before you start a course of exercises. The exercise beds are obviously ideal for anyone with hip, back or knee problems because they support your weight, rather like swimming.

Star Studio's weight-loss programme launches a triple attack on surplus adipose tissue: using the exercise machines in conjunction with their special slimming gels and diet.

There are three gels: one for fat, one for refirming tissue and the third for cellulitis - those nasty areas of lumpy "orange peel" skin that even the slim can have on hips or thighs. These gels are rubbed onto problem areas before putting on the baggy grey all-in-one that all Star Studio clients are presented with to do their exercises in. It matches the pale grey studio and the grey exercise machines - very restful!

The diet is individually worked out to suit food preferences and lifestyle and is not too stringent but, of course, no alcohol!

You can go to the Studio one, two or three times a week for as long as you like, though an average work-out lasts about one and a half hours. Naturally, all this does not come cheap; the cost depends on how much weight you want to lose and how often you want to attend but is likely to be around forty thousand pessetes if you need to lose ten to fifteen kilos and use the studio three times a week.

If you feel you would like to try the exercises and see if it suits you, Star Studio offers you a free session. Phone 62 1 54 for an appointment and mention the International Club. Take a track-suit and socks and spend as long as you like trying out the machines.

Star Studios is to be found in the road that runs behind Roc Blanc Hotel, on the fourth floor of the building next to the Paloma cafe. The Escaldes paying car-park is opposite, so there is never any difficulty in finding a parking place.

Two words of warning: the two young women in charge (one is a qualified masseuse) do not speak more than a few words of English but they can still show you what to do. The second is that though Star Studios is presumably unisex (there are men's changing-rooms), any male brave enough to venture there is likely to be outnumbered about fifty to one!



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THE "VETS" SKI CHAMPIONSHIPS

The annual National Veterans Championship was held at Arinsal on Sunday 21st. March and will no doubt linger long in the memory of those who participated. Seldom can ski racing have taken place in Andorra in such unpleasant weather, and it is to the credit of the organisers and competitors that the event was completed.

After a 9.30 a.m. check-in and an opportunity to test-ski down the side of the giant slalom piste, racing started shortly after 10 a.m. run as usual in age groups of five years commencing with the eldest ladies group, through to the youngest men's group (who look very young to more than a few of us). The day had started dull and gradually got worse. Those early starters had the best of it but it soon began to hail, which caused a short stoppage, then it began raining. A number of us skied the course in a downpour with predictable results, the rest having to wait for 20 minutes behind the starters hut for the rain to ease. They then had the problem of descending through "porridge" in most sections of the course. Thankfully there were no injuries and the worst anyone seemed to suffer was a thorough soaking. However there was plenty of time to drive home and enjoy a hot shower and a change of clothing before the presentation lunch at the Hotel Rutllan in La Massana. This was the usual noisy, atmospheric and thoroughly enjoyable occasion, sustained by a liberal supply of good food and wine, excellent company and a fair haul of the silverware at the British and Andorran ends of the table. We'll be back next year, older, certainly no wiser.

John Sundin



Photograph

Left to right: Norman Maddison 50-55 2nd. Shirley Sundin 55-59 2nd. Tom Mead 70-75 2nd. Lizzi Jewson 66-69 1st. Norman Empay 55-59 2nd. Maureen Mead 55-59 3rd. Michael Lewis-Price 60-65 1st.

ANDORRA'S FIRST-EVER EQUESTRIAN CROSS-COUNTRY EVENT

A heavy fall of snow the previous night and poor weather on the actual day failed to prevent the first l'Aldosa Cross Country Equestrian Event being staged at la Gonardaa organised by Mrs. Judy Hill on Easter Monday.

Eight senior riders up to eighteen years old and two Pony Class riders twelve years and under competed over twelve brush wood and pole obstacles for a distance of 2 1/2 kilometres.

In the Senior Class after a very exciting competition where the result was uncertain until the very last rider, Daniel Garcia had ridden and fallen but fortunately was not seriously injured. The final result was 1st. Lucy Broadhead riding Major in 4 minutes 15 seconds, 2nd. Davina Hill riding d'Artagnan in 4 minutes 21 seconds and 3rd. Martin Bell riding Actress in a time of 4 minutes 27 seconds. The prizes and medals were presented by David Le-Mare.

In the Pony Class with both entrants competing the course led respectively by Davina Hill on d'Artagnan and Lucy Broadhead on Major 1st. Melissa Hill riding Prince in a time of 5 minutes 42 seconds and 2nd Saskia Willets in a time of a 6 minutes 48 seconds. Prizes and medals were presented by Richard Green.

About thirty spectators and supporters enjoyed a splendid afternoon's competition in this the first event of its kind held in Andorra and with the weather fortunately clearing towards the end of the afternoon after prize giving and refreshments three cheers were given for the event organiser Mrs. Hill.



FINAL POSITIONS:

Senior

Rider	Mount	Faults.	Mins.	Seconds
1. Lucy Broadhead	Major		4	15
2. Davina Hill	D'Artagnan		4	21
3. Martin Bell	Actress		4	27
4. Lynsey Furmston	Gandolfi		5	09
5. Jacy Crozier	Actress		5	12
6. Katie Hearse	Gandolfi	4	5	12
7. Helena nielsen	Gandolfi	Disq.		
8. Daniel Garcia	D'Artagnan	Disq. F.		

Juniors

1. Melissa Hill	Prince	5	42
2. Saskia Willets	Prince	6	48

RAMBLING ABOUT OUR VALLEYS

by a Mature Co-respondent

We have noticed fewer Esquirols Catalenses crossing the border in the last few months. They normally come in to store their nuts safely for future consumption. We are not sure whether their scarcity is due to the less favourable climate here, or to an easing of attacks by their natural enemy *Lupus Ibericus Hacienda*.

A side effect is that the St. Julia colony of small western Iberian migrants is becoming smaller. Both the shorter Lusitanian House-buider and the lesser Gallego Stonechipper are becoming rare, together with their mates the black-crested Caixa-birds.

Some years ago the wise Pastor Pyrenneus brought his flocks down to enjoy the lush feeding in Andorra la Velha. Now he can be seen preparing new shelters for them, high on all the hillsides. We should respect the instinct that knows when there is enough wool on their backs, to weather, up there, any coming storms that could flood the valleys.

We welcome reports of new northern visitors. Male specimens of *Danske Tomentose* have been seen on

the forest paths. Identity them by their short gray beards. Females seem rare. This is either because the males are beyond breeding age, or the females are not acclimatised to altitude. We should look forward to seeing them pair up soon. She will preen away old fur in front of her male; and seeking a new summer coat, softly sing Krone, Krone, Krone!

A plague of *Grenouilles Gourmandii* arrived in July, settling overnight by the banks of the northern Valira. At midday they moved to high places and made Burnt Offerings of lamb; so that rain would fall in the afternoon. Despite this, when they went out to feed in the evening they could not find any local grub to their liking. We were lucky that Brutus Brittanicus Pilsner again confined himself to coastal regions. Where he could vary his normal diet by having a nibble at the crumpet toasting on the beaches. But further pests did arrive during the year: in August a procession of Caravans Vulgares blocked the Col de Envalira. A week into December swarms of locusts - Compradores de Regalos de Navidad, were attracted to the bright lights and stripped the shops of anything shiny. These were followed at the New Year by an outbreak of Esquiadores Barcelunatics. Gathering at Pal, they infected many locals, and together swept the pistes clear. Expats Sapiens went into temporary hibernation to lick their wounds.



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A VISIT TO THE ANTARCTIC

Jan - Feb. 1993

The Antarctic is the last unspoiled area in the world; it was like visiting another planet, of which the penguins are the chief inhabitants, and the icebergs provide the scenery.

We flew London-Rio-Buenas Aires, where we stayed overnight, and then on to Punta Arenas next day, to board the "Ocean Princess", a beautiful cruise ship. Punta Arenas is the most southerly city on the S. American continent. Our first stop was Ushuaia, on Tierra del Fuego; it is the most southern town in the world, and was once a penal colony, (until 1940).

From here we sailed south to the Antarctic Peninsular, which has many small islands off its coast, and it is on the "beaches" of these islands that the penguins breed. As soon as the ice and snow have receded, the penguins are there by the thousands. The penguins are as comical as they look; one could spend hours watching them. What one is not told about penguin colonies, is that they are very noisy and even more smelly!! (There is no rain to wash away their excrement.) We went ashore in Zodiacs, inflatable rubber boats with outboard engines; when there was a swell, it was quite tricky getting in and out. We visited penguin colonies on several different islands, one or two most days. One island, Deception, an old volcano, with very little snow on it, had no penguins, just steam coming out of hot springs on the beach, and in the sea. It was wonderfully quiet, no penguins, no wind and no engine noise. Some brave souls swam in the relatively hot water!

One place we went to, was on the Antarctic mainland. I am sure the only reason for going there was that we can now say we have actually walked on the continent itself!

The icebergs were incredible, from tiny lumps, to

huge masses, bigger than any ship, and larger than some of the islands we visited. Some of the icebergs were unbelievably blue. It is hard to describe the quality of an iceberg.*

We sailed by Elephant Island, but it was too rough to go ashore. It was called Elephant Islands, because at one time it had large colonies of Elephant seals, and it became famous because Ernest Shackleton, and twenty seven men lived,



under upturned boats, for 105 days. (One American woman, when told about this, said, "And did they have hot showers?")

After Elephant Island, we sailed north to the Falklands. Although these islands are approximately on the same latitude, south, as London is, north, they are treeless and windswept. We went to one island to see Black Browed Albatross and Rockhopper penguins, which nest in close proximity. On the main island, where Port Stanley is, we had an ecouter with a King Penguin,* who stands 1M tall. We found him on a sandy beach; we stood still and he came to see us, and came to within 3 or 4 feet of me.

We sailed north for two days, to Buenas Aires, and flew back to London.

*I have a video of the trip; icebergs and penguins are better seen than written about. I hope to be able to show it to anyone who is interested, in the near future.

Dinah Baxter.

GOODBYE LUCIA

This is a true story set in the heart of Italy.

The most unexpected and delightful experience to encounter on any holiday.

My husband was involved in the drama, and never stopped telling the story of how he got food for the stray dog at a very expensive Hotel, just when the head waiter was busy with dinner.

When I was kept waiting I said I wouldn't have my food until the dog was fed. I can just see the Italians now, raising their eyes to Heaven and saying "Gli Ingles - foolish with the animale". But I must start at the beginning.

We were both tired of the rat race in London and decided we needed a restful holiday, and we carefully chose a lovely spot called Ansedonia.

We flew to Rome then caught a train which nearly took us past our destination. We were in a first class compartment which in this case was not a good idea as when it arrived at Ansedonia it fell short of the end of the platform.

The Italian trains are rather high to step down from in any case, and with our luggage this would have meant a long drop down to the ground.

My husband rushed along two compartments to tell the guard we needed help. He had to get off the train to find him.

Oh! I had visions of my being left on the train with no lira in my pocket, and I nearly was, but for the fact that he spoke fluent Italian and was able to make the guard understand that we wanted to get off the train before he blew his whistle.

Well, after that excitement the Hotel car was

not there to meet us as arranged. So we had to phone, but I stayed where we had jumped off the train and it was the hottest part of the day when every sensible person keeps out of the sun.

My husband left me sitting on the luggage between the rails where the platform ended.

I must say that after two express trains thundered by on either side of me I was beginning to get a bit concerned. About twenty minutes later he returned with the driver and laughed his head off to see me sitting there all forlorn and rather pathetic, like the old silent film days.

"The perils of Pauline" I must say I wasn't sorry to be rescued.

The Hotel was fairly isolated and just what we needed. Built high on a hill and overlooking an enormous stretch of coast line, one had to go down to the beach in the Hotel's minibus, as it was a half-hour walk away.

Oh, it was a very charming place rather like a Swiss chalet.

There were bedrooms on the ground floor which had their own patio, leading on to a delightful garden, then straight to a swimming pool. Ideal if one felt lazy one day and didn't want to go to the beach. We were given one of the downstairs rooms and I remember at the time my husband asked me if I would prefer the first floor, but I said "No, this is O.K."

But for that decision the story might not have proceeded.

The following day we took it easy and stayed around the pool, when suddenly a bundle of fun comes padding round making friends with all the visitors on the way.

I was a lovely light brown and white mongrel bitch.

We patted her as she playfully rolled over on her back and we presumed she belonged to the Hotel.

She was on the grass leading to our bedroom when we left the pool to dress for dinner and I asked a waiter I saw playing with her who she really belonged to. He replied "She is a stray, I've adopted her and I call her Lucia".

So I was satisfied that she did belong to someone.

She disappeared until the next day or rather the evening.

Next to us were a very charming Belgian couple, as I came out on to my patio, they called me and pointed out that Lucia was limping, she had cut her paw on some wire. They gave me some antiseptic and without another thought I cleansed her wound. My husband said afterwards "One day you'll get bitten, she could have had rabies".

She was so gentle and seemed to appreciate love and affection.

I wanted to take her to the vet but we were miles from the nearest town. I was told that dogs heal themselves, so with the sea water and my prayers it did in fact clear up in a few days. She always seemed hungry and the waiter who I had spoken to said he was off to Venice to work with his brother and couldn't take her with him. In the meantime I supplied her with honey and biscuits from my breakfast tray and a good meal from the restaurant in the evening. The waiters must have thought I was a very greedy woman always having two helpings of cheese at mealtimes. I used to squirrel it in a doggy bag and I must say she was thoroughly living it up on belpaese and dolce-latte.

She started to spend the nights on a wicker chair in our patio. Then I decided to place a cushion on the floor in the bedroom which she thought was jolly good, some nights I never saw her but she left a bone in the chair once. I like to think it was to tell me she hadn't forgotten and had stayed part of the night, but didn't want to disturb us. As each day went by I didn't know how I was going to say good-bye.

JEN INTERNACIONAL, S.L.

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There was one strange incident, she had settled down on the cushion for the night having finally decided it was better than the woods.

We had a big dinner that evening and felt like a quiet stroll down to the bottom of the hill where there was a trattoria, we thought it would be nice to take Lucia with us, she wouldn't accept a lead and my husband said "Why bother, she can walk with us as she knows her way around better than we do".

So off we marched! We sat under the trees for one drink and she enjoyed it al fresco, but as the insects began to fly around the padrone suggested we went inside. This didn't please Lucia maybe on other occasions she had been shooed away.

I looked around for her and she was off. I called her and as I crossed the road, I heard a rustling in the undergrowth, then silence as she disappeared in the woods.

I was disappointed as I felt that after all she was wild and wanted her own life. But could you blame her, she lived for the moment without any thought of what the future would bring, little did she know of how assured it would be.

So after a few drinks we trundled back up the hill to the Hotel, and to my surprise when we opened the door to the bedroom there was Lucia curled up on her cushion having entered from the patio. She had taken her shortcut back through the woods whilst we had returned the longest way by road.

It was reaching the end of our holiday and I was sousing everyone to see if I could find her a home. Some nice Swiss people at the next table were joining in on the food collecting for her, but said they had a business to run, that it would be difficult to have an animal. Noone seemed to care that much. I wasn't very happy as my husband said I couldn't take

her back with all the quarantine regulations, he also didn't think she could stand the English climate after Italy. I even dreamed of going home then flying out a week later to make arrangements etc.

What a pipedream!

The day I was to pack I saw her on the lawn and I hadn't the heart to say goodbye.

As she had a routine of cutting through the woods to the beach, I let her go with a sad heart so she could do her usual scavenging by the shore, and by doing that gave the Swiss couple an opportunity of being with her, although at the time I didn't know they were on the beach.

Guilia said that the dog never came to her when I was around. I steeled my heart and went up to the terrace for a last look at the beach which was miles below and suddenly, knowing that Lucia was somewhere down there, I felt my heart overflowing with love for her and I wished sincerely although I had to leave her, that someone else would befriend her and give her a home. As soon as the winter came the hotel would be closed, and where would she find food?

I descended the steps to our waiting taxi and just as we were about to drive away, the minibus returned from the beach. We got out to say arrivederci to the Swiss couple, when suddenly a miracle happened. Guilia said "We have decided to take Lucia back to Switzerland, they had travelled by car so it was easy for them. To think if we had left two minutes early I should never have known what had become of my little friend.

I subsequently visited them in Berne, her home was a beautiful mansion, she was greatly loved, but the years have passed by, and so has Lucia.

Mary J. Eldridge

IBERIAN BARBERS

A friend of mine used to refer to a haircut as "Getting his ears lowered". Which precisely described what happened to patrons of Joe Russell (Petty officer RN retired). He needed only ten minutes, in his Bank Street barber's shop, back home, to produce a short back and sides. Before leering "Will there be anything else, Sir?" After nearly six years this side of the Pyrenees I have not achieved anything much better than an "ear lowering"; some worse and some memorable.

The first attempt was in San Pedro de Alcántara, a few weeks after arriving on the Costa del Golf. I didn't have to wait long as there were two barbers at work, cutting and chatting to all and sundry. I sat in the right-hand chair, indicated that my hair was far too long, and that I wanted it cut to about a centimetre above my ears at the side, and the same above my collar at the back. This explained with fairly positive hand actions, and weakened by fairly negative Spanish.

The result was a lopsided cut; far shorter on the right than on the left side. People who wear glasses are vulnerable to bad cutting, as they have no chance of seeing what may be going wrong until too late. On this occasion a considerable argument developed about football, principally between my barber and a man waiting on the left side of the shop. Obviously my man could not make his points very well when his back was turned and he was cutting my left side. So he operated chiefly on my right side in order to face his opponent.

I grew that one level eventually; and when my golfing cap next became too small for my head, determined to play safe and find a barber in English-speaking Gibraltar. There is no posh saloon on Main Street where the nervous can get safely scalped. So it was off to the side streets, which are not that salubrious in Gib. A splendid barbers pole decorated a smart modern shop in the second alley I traversed. I went confidently in, pausing just a moment to get used to the gloom after the brightness of the sunshine outside. I was conscious of someone

shutting the door behind me and staying there to cut off my retreat. A very tall Berber from the Atlas mountains, with a black beard and a hooked nose, dressed in a long brown robe, frightened me into the nearest of three chairs. I sat down nervously. Next he submerged me under a heavy gray calico poncho, and drew a string which tightened it round my neck. He went to the basin in front of me and started to strop a big cut-throat razor with vigorous flourishes.

As neither of us had yet said a word I thought I had better let him know it was a haircut I had in mind. (Years back, as a result of a Venetian thunderstorm, and an unexpected overnight stop without benefit of niceties like pyjamas and razors; I had gone to a barbers shop next morning and been shaved by a drunken Italian with a cut-throat. Never again!) The stropping continued. Another Arab appeared, not quite as fierce looking, dressed in a robe made of the stuff that Boarding-School mattresses are invariably covered in. We found a common language somewhere between Spanish and English, and he started cutting. Number one Arab went on stropping the razor. It had the same effect on me as, I expect, the Chinese Water Torture has on its victims. When it was put to use on the back of my neck, I would have rather have had a tooth filled without an injection.

It was quite a good haircut, really, if a little too short for some tastes.

It must have been months later that I plucked up enough courage to try again. With luck it takes three months for my hair to grow from Foreign Legion recruit to Third Violin. I was in Portugal at the time, and spotted a unisex salon in the main street of Cascais. It seemed a safe bet, although I don't really hold with the idea of mixed hairdressing. There are some things best unseen.

I was shown to a chair by an unexceptional person who dressed me in a cape in a particularly revolting shade of "Hairdresser's" Mauve' trimmed with pale blue lace. She said "Ingles"? and then something like "espera conception" and departed. I was still turning the pages of my small mental Portuguese dictionary, to deter-

mine what she really must have meant when a pale coffe-coloured vision arrived beside me.

Fortunately I had'nt taken my glasses off, and could see long legs that went on almost for ever before disappearing - barely in time - into a brief pair of emerald green shorts. A wide gold belt cinched a light tee-shirt, which was printed with a tropical island design and overfilled with nature's bounty. Shining white teeth and sparkling eyes joined in the smile radiating from her pretty face. She took my hand from the arm of the chair, said "You come", and led me through a beaded-curtain doorway to rear room.

Was this the stuff of fantasy? Ye Gods!

When the mist cleared, I saw I had been brought into the shampooing room, with those awful back-wash basins. Designed by a committee of out-of-work osteopaths, to drum up business; and foisted on the ladies hairdressing profession to pander to some whim that escapes me.

I sat down and wriggled lower on the chair to get my neck in the niche so cunningly mal-sited. Surely even Madame Guillotine was better designed. The "vision" arrived to cover my chest with a towel, while on her's the azure sea heaved inches from my eyes, and a silver roller danced up the islands's golden beach. I submitted to the shampooing with my eyes closed or fixed on the ceiling. The torture over, she sat me up and rubbed my hair vigourously with the towel. A tropical squall lashed the palm trees until the coconuts seemed in danger of falling - mercifully only darkness fell as the towel descended over my eyes.

Back in the salon proper we traced a plimsol line around my head and agreed that above this it would be "graduado". As she started to work her hair fell across her face. So she stood up, and with both hands tucked it into a headband. While the clouds and birds flew, together, high into the purple sky, before settling down again above the palm trees. She leant against my shoulder and fiddled around with a comb to try and find my parting. Unsatisfied, she moved round and repeated the exercise on the other side. Did she have any idea what she was doing to me, I wondered?

"You Ingleesh?"

"Yes. And you are from...?"

"I from Brasil. I call me "Concepcion da Ribiera Silva". You like?"

"Very pretty".

"I dance all over the oceans. Rio to Lisbon, in cabaret. Money no good. I jump the ship with my sailorman. Soon we have money and go see Madrid, Paris, Londres. Last I marry in Roma. I ask O Papa. Is my dream from a little girl". She giggled happily.

Concepcion finished the cut, took a hand mirror from the shelf, and held it behind my head, to gain my approval. I asked for my glasses, and she went to the shelf and got them.

She resumed her position proudly behind me, this time forgetting to raise the mirror, and said,

"You like how I made?"

"Sensational!"

Michael Gale

 **viatges relax**



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ARINSAL

TRANSFERING MONEY LET'S BE NICE TO THE BANKS WEEK

When one wants to transfer money from country to country, the advice generally given is that telegraphic transfers save money in the long run, because saving time means retaining more interest or enables the money to be put to other uses. The claim is often made that such a transfer is instantaneous, although in fact three or four days seems to be normal; one of my complaints about delay was answered by an explanation that the telegraph had to go via London (apparently the banks in the two major cities I was concerned with were not on telegraphic speaking terms), and in London my transfer was "walked" (apparently literally so) between two banks, and that took a day.

The costs of such transfers seem to vary considerably. A friend told me that the cost of transferring a sum less than £30,000 from England to Andorra was £35, but transferring a similar sum from Andorra to the Channel Islands cost the equivalent of £117 (exchange rates not being involved).

I transfer very much smaller sums from Hong Kong, but the charge for the transfer, irrespective of the amount, is the equivalent of under £9, with a delay of no more than two days. One might expect Hong Kong to be efficient - the post from Hong Kong often seems to

reach me more quickly than a letter from the head office of my bank in Andorra la Vella takes to get to the branch I use.

But why are there differences in transfer costs? The tariff for "Swift" or "Telex" transfer is, apparently, 0,25%, plus the odd extra charge a bank might invent, plus a margin made on the exchange rate, if used. However, in Britain, and no doubt many other countries, the 0,25% has a maximum of £35. That maximum does not seem to apply in Andorra, and for those fortunate enough to be able to transfer really large sums of money, the charges must be discouraging.

The Co-operative Bank in Britain (and no doubt others, for I am not on commission from that bank) now uses, as well as the other methods, a transfer method called Tipa-net, which charges £5, with no extras, for transfers from Britain to, at present, a few other countries, and takes four days to France.

In France, the system is available only at the Bank Populaires, but there is a branch in Bourg Madame. The Co-op say that that Bank charges ££79 for a transfer under Tipa, "The same charge they would make for a Swift payment".

So if British banks can make transfers for £5, and French ones for ££79 and Hong Kong ones for under £9, as maximums, why do our banks, whose overhead costs are surely not greater, have to charge many times those figures?

SAVE ANOTHER FOREST THIS WEEK

Someone said that the only way to save Andorra, as an attractive holiday or residential country, was to ban the internal combustion engine above 1200 metres; and estate agents above the same sort of height; and all commercial skiing-support machines. Maybe that someone had his tongue just a little in his cheek, but, in any case, since all the

readers of this magazine are involved in at least one of those categories, perhaps we ought not to mention his name.

But doesn't he have a point? A lot of fuss, indeed a world-wide fuss, has been made about the loss of the rain forest, and no doubt many a peasant living on 100 ptas a month thought that now he had the chance to join the fitted-kitchen-owners portrayed so luxuriously in those Hollywood films and Ariel detergent advertisements he had seen on his local television; and that chance of his living

standards taking off from the world's lowest level has been denied him, perhaps to appease our consciences.

Of course, the rain forests are not the same as the Pyrennes woods. The former take scores of years to establish, and serve a climatic purpose that the local smaller pine woods cannot. Pines can be grown in much less time, but have you seen many pine woods being planted around here recently? And have you seen small areas of pines apparently dying - of pollution, their water supply gone, their protective screening cut away, or what?

There are many current plans for developing our mountains. In Andorra alone, there are plans for more ski areas, at least one golf course, an airport, a trout farm, a lot more roads, and no doubt many other bright ideas; if you give an engineer a bit of unused land and bulldozer, there's no end to the ideas he might come up

with. Was there not something about no more than eight per cent of Andorra's land being used for development? - yes, of course, did any one really believe that?

When more mountainside trees are cut down here, for more skiing areas, or building areas or roads, a family not too well off by European standards, probably Portuguese, may benefit, but the real benefits go to the developers, who are unlikely to be able to justify their mountain clearance on the same grounds as a third world peasant clearing rain forest; and to the tourists (for there are already ample ski and mountain top resorts for those live in the Pyrennes).

Somebody said (not the same somebody) that he welcomed tourists because they paid his taxes, and he could avoid the traffic jams. The next few years may make him change his mind. Meanwhile the quiet lonely mountain walks get fewer every year.

OUTRAGE OVER EXPAT PENSIONS

The above was a recent headline in the "Investor". It refers to the fact that British Old-Age Pensions are subject to what appears to be variable rules. The U.K. first started paying pensions to persons living abroad in 1955. Initially no increases were given to any of these payments. But gradually as time has passed the U. K. has granted inflationary increases to expats living in some countries and not in others. If you retire to a country in the European Community or to the United States or even Barbados there will be an annual increase to your pension. However, if you retire to most other countries including Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa and of course Andorra, the pension will remain frozen. The situation is obviously far from equitable. The amazing thing is that those of us

who receive pensions from the Paymaster General (i.e. ex-Civil Servants, Teachers, Armed Services) do get inflationary increases).

A campaign is being mounted to attempt to change the position and make all expats eligible for these increases. In fact Mr. Winston Churchill MP. believes that expats should be paid an additional amount, since a number of expenses are no longer borne by the U.K. government, expenses such as Health Care. British residents, whether receiving a pension or not, are urged to add their names to support Mr. Churchill in his campaign. A sample form, as published in the "Investor" can be found below.

We would be very interested to discover the position enjoyed, or otherwise, by members of the Club from other countries. Do you get your State Pension, and is it indexed-linked? Information to the Editors please, and we will send that on as well to London.

Support the campaign for index-linked pensions

YOU will have learnt from our front page story of the discrimination that exists between the pensions paid to British people living in various parts of the world.

If you support the moves being made to redress the situation as outlined in the story, fill in the form below and send in to The Editor, Expat Investor, Tolley House, 2 Addiscombe Road, Croydon, Surrey CR9 5AF UK.

All forms will be sent to Winston Churchill MP who is raising the matter in Parliament. Remember, if you are not a pensioner now, you will be one day.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

I support the moves being made to make the pensions
British people living anywhere abroad index-linked.

Signed _____

SEX AND POWER

SAMIA OMAR

John F. Kennedy had a legendary libido; so have many other powerful men. But scientists have come up with a less than romantic explanation of the high flier's sex drive. Is it really down to chemicals?

When the Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu was discovered to be having a liason with a sultry blonde air-hostess half his age, he must have realised what the result would be - the beginning of the end of his political career. The ageing lover may have won envious admiration of a proportion of male voters, but his standing plummeted with the rest of the electorate, and even a subsequent hasty and secretive marriage to Dimitra Liam did nothing to restore it.

What made the 70 year old Papandreu throw caution to the winds in the sort of sex scandal that has ruined men half his age? Carelessness, disregard for any moral imperatives, such as the feelings of his wife, family and public? Grand passion at an age when he thought that he was past it? Or is it simply that, to put it at its most basic, successful men are randier than others?

President Kennedy, from whom, it now appears, few women were safe, certainly not the scores of secretaries, stewardesses and actresses who passed in unending procession through his bed. «I wonder how it is with you Harold?» he once said to Harold Macmillan in the middle of a working lunch on nuclear aims. «If I don't have a woman for three days I get a terrible headache». It was only the loyalty of his aides that prevented a scandal of global proportions. One of his special girlfriends, Judith Exner, was simultaneously involved with a mafia chief.

Gary Hart ruined by his affair with Donna Rice. In a curious echo of the Papandreu scandal, his relationship with the beautiful

model came to light when it was found that he had taken a trip with her on a yacht aptly named «Monkey Business».

Picasso, whose aggressive, often casual, sexual drive went hand in hand with his creativity.

Aristotle Onassis, a man whose drive for success was matched only by his insatiable pursuit of women.

Is it power and achievement that gives a man the feeling that, like the dominant stag that drives all other males away so that he has a whole herd of females to himself, his success brings with it some atavistic right to enjoy more women than the single monogamous relationship predicated by our society and culture? Or is an increased libido simply an expression of the same forceful drive that made them successful in the first place?

To many women power itself is the ultimate aphrodisiac, with money as its most common form of expression. Otherwise how would you account for the success of Adnan Khashoggi who, despite being fat, lecherous and of dubious business morality, had no trouble in acquiring beautiful female companions. Nor is Sir Ralph Halpein exactly an Adonis, yet he dated a series of glamorous models.

Psychologist Jane Firkbank remarks, "Right through the animal kingdom you have the female choosing to mate with a male who has proved his superiority in some way".

As with all matters sexual, it takes two to tango. And as far as men are concerned, all the physiological evidence points in the same direction; that success brings with it an increased sex drive. "Levels of the male sex hormone testosterone, responsible for libido, have been found to be intimately linked with success", confirms Dr. Malcolm Carruthers. "The higher the sense of achievement, the greater the amount of male hormone

present in the bloodstream.. Victory gives a sudden surge that is the equivalent of an injection of libido. Whenever a man wins, whether at sport or at work, testosterone levels rise instantly. But they go down just as fast if he loses "Sex and creativity have, of course, long been linked in the popular mind, though usually in terms of either / or, with sexual indulgence seen as dispersing vital forces.

Chopin believed firmly that sex prevented him composing, "Inspiration and ideas only come when I have not had a woman for a long time", he declared, and once wrote in a burst of reproach, tenderness and despair to his mistress, "Ballads, polonaises, even a whole concerto may have been lost, perhaps for ever, inside your little E flat major..."

When a man is facing what he perceives as a dangerous, difficult or otherwise stressful situation, adrenalin is released into his bloodstream, producing the well-know fight or flight syndrome. Along with an increased breathing rate, pallor, raised heart-beat, clammy palms, tension or even fear, gives a concentration focused solely on surviving this particular moment, with sex as the last thing on his mind. Once the situation is over and he has "won", ether literally or by successfully coping with it, another hormone takes over. This one is called noradrenalin. Though also produced by the renal gland, its effect is quite different. Dr. Carruthers describes it as the bodys kick-start hormone; it simulates the

brain's pleasure centres, and also the production of testosterone. In one study, blood samples taken from male players both before and immediately after a tennis tournament found the testosterone levels of the loser had dropped while those of the victorious players had shot up dramatically.

For a man on a noradrenal high, the expression "flushed with success" becomes literally true, especially if it comes after a initial tension or fear. The blood surges back into all the vessels of the body and the face becomes pink and rosy instead of exhibiting the pallor of our pre-contest nerves or stage-fright. Unfortunately this isn't all; so great is the feeling of exhilaration that some men turn to drugs or drink to maintain the sensation of pleasure, others are swept into behaviour that is unaccountable to those around them, which jepordizes everything they have worked and fought for. And, since noradrenal brings along with it raised testosterone levels, it is sexual follies that predominate.

What about women? Dr. Carruthers states that a minority of women who are leading a more "masculine" life, in terms of career and success, are following the male pattern in other ways, with an increased level of testosterone (instead of oestrogen). This means that they become more promiscuous as they become more successful though not more loving.

(Samia has summarised an article by Anne de Courcey which appeared in "Women's Journal").

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VIEWS OF OLD ANDORRA

This is intended as an on-going series. One member has offered a collection of old photographs, but we would welcome any old photos or postcards.



Photo 1. Andorra la Vella circa 1965



Photo 2. The road to Andorra - early 1950's



le Gers

Focus on
Heart of Gascony



"This varied land, blessed with southern sun and Atlantic freshness, is arguably the most exquisitely beautiful, rustic and satisfying region in France... The whole of this rural heartland, remains undiscovered except by a few wise connoisseurs who, no doubt would prefer to guard their secret".

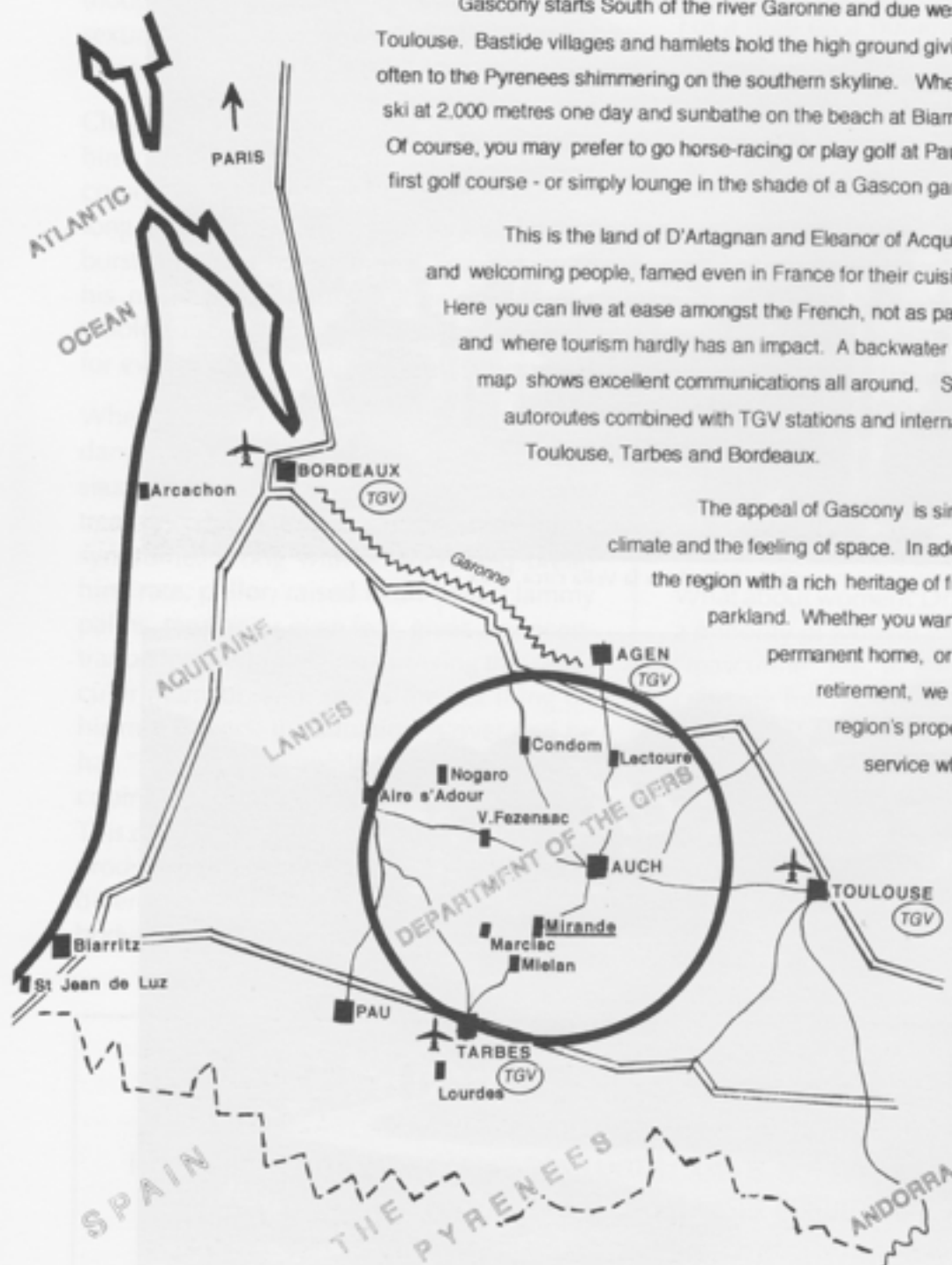
So writes Andrew Sangar in his authoritative guide on SW France.

Gascony starts South of the river Garonne and due west of the city of Toulouse. Bastide villages and hamlets hold the high ground giving immense views - often to the Pyrenees shimmering on the southern skyline. Where else can you ski at 2,000 metres one day and sunbathe on the beach at Biarritz the next? Of course, you may prefer to go horse-racing or play golf at Pau - the continent's first golf course - or simply lounge in the shade of a Gascon garden.

This is the land of D'Artagnan and Eleanor of Aquitaine, home of a proud and welcoming people, famed even in France for their cuisine and quality of life. Here you can live at ease amongst the French, not as part of a foreign ghetto, and where tourism hardly has an impact. A backwater refuge perhaps, yet the map shows excellent communications all around. See the network of new autoroutes combined with TGV stations and international airports at Toulouse, Tarbes and Bordeaux.

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 heritage of fine architecture and parkland. Whether you want a holiday cottage, a permanent home, or somewhere to enjoy your retirement, we can offer the best of the region's properties and a professional service which goes back 20 years.

*Bienvenue dans le Gers
et en Gascogne!*



Where to stay

Contact us for a choice of hotels, chambres d'hôte, comfortable self catering apartment and gite.

WAYS TO COOK YOUR BEEF

BEEF AND BACON

Substantial dish of beef fillet with bacon and fried courgettes

- Serves 4
- 4 rashers thinly sliced bacon
- 2 small courgettes, peeled and sliced thickly
- 2tbsp seasoned flour
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1oz/25g butter
- 4 fillet steaks

Salt and ground black pepper.

Fry bacon in a pan until fat runs and it turns crispy. Remove with a slotted spoon and keep hot. Dip courgettes into seasoned flour. Add onion, garlic and fry until softened. Add courgettes and fry until browned. Remove.

Melt butter in the pan and fry steaks both sides to personal preference. Season. Arrange bacon, steak and courgette mix on warmed serving plates.

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 15 minutes approx.

Approximate nutritional values per portion: 700 calories, 15g carbohydrate, 60g fat, 50g protein.

BEEF IN COGNAC

Thinly sliced steaks flash fried and served with cream and brandy

- Serves 4
- 4 rump or flash fry steaks
- Oil for frying
- 1oz/25g butter
- 4tbsp brandy
- 1/4 pint/150ml beef stock
- 1/4 pint/150ml double cream
- Salt and Cayenne pepper
- 1oz/25g flaked almonds, toasted.

Fry steaks quickly in oil and butter both sides to preference. Pour over brandy and tilt the pan to ignite.

Remove steaks and keep hot when flames have died down. Add stock and cream to the pan and bring to the boil until slightly reduced. Season with salt and cayenne.

Arrange the steaks on warmed plates and pour a little sauce around each. Sprinkle with warmed toasted almonds before serving.

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Approximate nutritional values per portion: 400 calories, 10g carbohydrate, 25g fat, 25g protein.

BEEF A LA BORDELAISE

Marinated braising steak served with sliced marrow

For the marinade:

- 1/4 pint/150ml red wine
- 4tbsp olive oil
- Few onion rings
- 2 cloves garlic, sliced
- Sprig of parsley
- Few black peppercorns
- Sprig of parsley
- Few black peppercorns
- Sprig of thyme
- 1 bay leaf

To cook:

- 2lb/900g braising steak, sliced

- 1tbsp oil
 - 1oz/25g butter
 - 1 onion, peeled and sliced
 - 1/4 pint/150ml beef stock
 - 4oz/100g beef or veal marrow, sliced
- Salt and ground black pepper
Sprigs of parsley for decoration
Mix marinade ingredients and pour into a shallow dish. Add steaks and leave to soak for 3 hours or as long as possible.
Remove steaks from marinade.
Strain marinade and reserve liquid.
Heat oil and butter in a pan and brown steaks. Place in an ovenproof dish.

Add onions to the pan and fry quickly to brown before adding to steaks. Pour over the reserved marinade liquid and stock.

Cover and cook at Gas 3, 325F, 160C for 1 hour or until steak is tender. Add marrow 5 minutes before end of cooking. Season.

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Cooking time: 1 hour 15 minutes approx.

Approximate nutritional values per portion: 400 calories, 8g carbohydrate, 30g fat, 25g protein.

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AN A-B-C OF CLEANING HINTS

A.- is for Alcohol. Stains from alcoholic drinks must be treated at once. Sponge with cold water. Then pour a little glycerine on to the stain and rub gently. Leave for about half an hour, then sponge with water again.

B.- is for Blood. Soak bloodstains in salt and cold water. When stain has faded wash in warm water.

C.- is for Chocolate. Scrape off as much as possible of the chocolate with a blunt knife. If fabric is washable, launder with soap and water. If non-washable sponge with carbon tetrachloride. Dry. Sponge with warm water. Dust with powdered pepsin and work the

powder gently into the material. Leave for 30 minutes. Sponge with water.

D.- is for Decanter. Stains inside a decanter will usually yield to ammonia. Fill it with water plus two teaspoons of ammonia and let it stand overnight.

E.- is for Egg. Never use hot water on an egg stain. It will set it. Sponge the spot with cold water. If the stain is stubborn, work powdered pepsin into the damp spot. Leave for 30 minutes then rinse.

F.- is for Fruit. Soak the stain in borax and water (1 teaspoon borax to a pint of water) Leave for 10 minutes. Rinse well. More to follow in the next issue.



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**EARLY WARNING!
ST. GEORGE'S CHRISTMAS FAIR!
PLANTS KNITTING STAMPS
Clare Allcard**

The lazy, hazy days of summer are upon us. All those with green fingers will be itching to be up and doing. Why not spare a few moments to take cuttings, plant seedlings, bulbs and herbs, in short grow anything that could be ready for sale at the plant stall this November.

Those of you who prefer to take your pleasures sitting down, and know how to knit, do contact Brenda Ross (36886) to see what sells best on her knitted goods stall. Or get together with her once a month for a knit-in.

Collecting used postage stamps demands neither green fingers nor an even tension; just a plastic bag near the waste paper basket where you can save ALL your undamaged postage stamps. In the next issue of Intercomm I will arrange to collect them, sort them and package them. So please don't forget. It is something everyone can do to help Andorran charities and St. George's Church. Start saving now.

BACK ISSUES OF THIS MAGAZINE ARE AVAILABLE. Get them at the coffee morning or contact Tony on 36 1 54. Cost 200 Pts.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE
BLACKSTONE FRANKS
INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR**

**Hotel Roc Blanc
Andorra la Vella
Wednesday 30th June
Commencing at 4.30 p.m.**

All expatriate investors are seeking the best of both worlds. Maximum income and growth with minimum risk! With interest rates at such low levels what are your alternatives?

Attending the Seminar will be Ewan Brown the Director of Guinness Flight Asset Management Ltd responsible for fixed interest securities and currency management. Guinness Flight are one of the most successful and highly respected investment houses in the UK. Last year their Global High Income Bond Fund produced a 25,1% increase. Come and hear what he has in say about the prospects for bonds and currencies for 1993. The Seminar will also include an interesting discussion on continuing tax-freedom - even if you return to the UK. at a future date.

We'll finish coffee around 6,30 p.m. This is one of the most important Seminars ever organised by Blackstone Franks - you'll kick yourself if you miss it. Put it in your diary now.

For further information please contact: Ian Oak-Rhind: 63 33 16 46

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Solution to the last Crossword. No Crossword in this issue - hope to have one for next time.



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Tels: 35 2 28 - 35 0 55
Tèlex: ANDOCISA 292 AND
Fax: 35 0 35

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