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CLUB INTERNACIONAL D'ANDORRA

NEWSLETTER/BUTLLETÍ INFORMATIU



VOL. 4 - Núm. 2 - WINTER / HIVERN 1994

CLUB INTERNACIONAL D'ANDORRA

INFORMATION / INFORMATIU

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COFFEE MORNING IS HELD EVERY WEDNESDAY (10.30 - 12.30) AT THE HOTEL PARIS-LONDRES, ESCALDES, COME ALONG FOR A PLEASANT MORNING.
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 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 PHOTOGRAPH BY TONY HOOPER

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 - WINTER 1994

EDITORS: Jacquie Crozier and Tony Hooper

EDITORIAL

Once again we are coming to the end of a year, and what is frightening is that it seems a very short time since I started the Editorial for December 1993 with the same words. It must be that I, along with all the readers are getting older, and the old adage that the years go quicker the older one is, is true!

1994 has been a good year for the Club, with numerous activities organised, and, more importantly well supported. Thanks must go to those who have put in so much time to ensure that members can enjoy a full programme of outings, visits, meals, adventure etc..

Let us reminisce a little. Adventure activities first; two excellent days for White Water Rafting - I think we might make a claim to the Guinness Book of Records for the crews with the oldest average age! Another great adventure was the Helicopter flight - but you can read more about that in this edition. Visits have been regular and include the trip by rack railway to Nuria, and the recent trip to Tarragona; again there is a full report in the later pages. Meals have varied from the New Year Eve's rave-up at the Hostel Poblado, a picnic/barbeque, to the paella lunch at Engolasters. And we are not finished because as you will have been informed there are more functions involving food in the near future. Make sure that you read the excellent information sheets that are sent to all members.

Another great success has been the Weekly Newsletter. Response seems to grow week by week and many members order their copies weeks in advance.

Remember, if you find it difficult to collect your copy from the Coffee Morning you have two alternative methods of obtaining one. Copies can be obtained from Estil Nordic in La Massana, or you can provide self-addressed envelopes for any length of time - but don't forget to pay for the copies required in advance.

One adverse comment! I drove for 5 hours to attend the A.G.M. and was most disappointed to find only a very small number of members in attendance. One hopes that this indicates that the membership is happy with the way that the Club is being run, but I feel that a truly vibrant Club should attract more members at this once a year function.

NEWS FROM THE BOARD

Although the Board has continued to meet regularly it has been an uneventful period since the last issue of Intercomm.

We have now purchased a photocopier which is now working without the problems which were mentioned in the last issue of Intercomm. If you want to obtain old copies of the Weekly Newsletter they can be obtained

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from Estil Nordic. The Board have decided that past issues should cost 50 Pts each in view of the additional time taken to copy small numbers. In addition **please telephone in advance** so that the staff of Estil Nordic can do the copies when they do not have to attend to customers.

It is with great regret that the Board has accepted the resignation of Pop Goldsteen for personal reasons. Pop has supported the club since its inception. She was a very successful Social Activities organiser during the period she worked on the Board. We are sure you will all want to join us in wishing her well for the future.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS INTERNATIONAL SINGERS

After a slack summer we are now heading full tilt towards our third Festival of International Christmas Music. At the last meeting we had 10 present including our wonderful pianist, Binnie Segal, seated at the helm of her new baby grand. Next week we hope to be joined by the men who make such a difference to the final performance. This year we will sing in eight languages including Danish, Dutch and German and we are investigating the possibility of providing refreshments after the concert. We are hoping to get some first class soloists to swell our programme and very much look forward to seeing you all in the Ordino Church on SUNDAY 18th. DECEMBER AT 4 P.M.

Our women's choir will continue into 1995. At present we have 16 members but so often people are away that we would very much like to increase the choir further. As an example of our problem" we have five altos in the group' recently one was in Australia, one in Holland, one in America, one in France and the last in England. So come on, sign up, and if only we can get enough members we can give a concert next spring. If interested please ring Clare Allcard 836269, Sheila Hooper 836154 Or Pop Goldsteen 835621.

SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING

The new season of Scottish Country Dancing started with a bang and numbers are increasing all the time. At the last meeting there were 16 in all, several of them welcome new faces. As always, we go right back to the beginning for the new members who very quickly get the hang of it under the expert and patient guidance of our enthusiastic teacher, John Gill. So do come along to the Church Hall in La Massana, 4.30 - 6.30 on Sundays, for a couple of hours of excellent exercise set to great music. Lose pounds, meet new people and have fun while stimulating your grey matter as you try to remember the really very simple figures of the Scottish Country Dance. For any further information please ring: John Gill 837109, Clare Allcard 836269 or Laura Fecanin 836869

NATURALISTS

After another very busy year which included two long weekends spent in Spain, the Group has now produced its programme for 1995. Anyone who enjoys nature is welcome to join our field trips: it is not necessary to know a robin from a raven or a daisy from a dandelion because there are always members who are happy to help. We can usually arrange to lend field guides or binoculars if you contact us in advance.

January 19

**Video and CD/slides: "Birds And Flowers of New Zealand and S/W. Australia" - " Belize and Tikal" Plus quiz with prizes.

11.00 am Jacquie Crozier's, Cortal de la Solana, Anyos(weather permitting) (835931). Drinks and light refreshments provided for lunch. If any member has any slides or videos to show please contact Jacquie Crozier.



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February 16

****Identification videos of seabirds, wildfowl, and waders as preparation for visit to the Camargue.**

11.00 am Dinah Baxter's, Casa F-1 la Pleta Ordino (836980)

**** Note please contact the Hostess in advance if you would like to attend these two indoor meetings**

February 24-27

Long weekend to the CAMARGUE. Fuller details nearer the time - booking closes Jan 19th.

March 16

Les Bons, Encamp for early spring migrants. Meet at the bridge below the village.

April 13

(Note this is the 2nd Thursday in the month)

Walk along the river Segre near Seu d'Urgell. Meet at the Spanish frontier.

May 18

Visit to a small, new reserve near Portlet, Toulouse created from a series of disused gravel pits. Breeding Night Herons, Kingfishers, Nightingales, Golden Orioles as well as flowers. Meet at French frontier at **9.00 am**

June 8 (2nd Thursday) and July 20

Fieldwork for the Atlas of Breeding Birds of Andorra. Please phone Jacquie Crozier for details.

August

No meeting

September 15-17

Long weekend to watch migration at OGANBIDEXKA, French Pyrenees, near Lourdes. Fuller details nearer time. Booking closes July 20.

October 19

Orlu reserve near Ax-les-Thermes, France. Marmots, chamois and beautiful autumn colours in the beech woods. Meet at the French frontier **9.00 a.m.**

November 16

Sant Lorenç near Balaguer. Bonelli's eagles, water birds and a possibility of Wallcreeper.

Meet at the Spanish frontier at **9.00 am.**

Unless otherwise stated, all meetings are at 11.00 am on the 3rd Thursday in each month. carry - your binoculars (ask to borrow a pair if needed), a waterproof, hat, sweater, your lunch and a drink: your passport for trips outside Andorra. Wear boots or walking shoes. And

don't forget sun lotion, insect repellent and antihistamine cream if the time of year and region demand them.

There is the possibility of extra outings if requested. For example a couple of days at Aiguamolls reserve in spring. Please ask.

Contact Jacquie Crozier (835931) or Ann Matschke (841279)

DRAMA GROUP

There is nothing new to report at the time of writing.

A meeting has been called for November 21st. primarily to discuss which is the best direction for the Drama Group to go at this time.

The transient activities of the members pose the biggest problem, making it, at times, difficult to be consistent in our presentations.

Perhaps attracting new members and enlarging the membership as a whole could be part of the answer. At least we would be able to establish a more permanent company of participants.

The other possibility, as stated in our last communiqué, is the finding and establishing of our own Theatre Arts Centre.

Again, any suggestions from C.I.A. members are certainly welcome.

Stay tuned in to the ongoing saga.

Rene De Knight.

WHAT PRICE A GUARANTEE IN ANDORRA?

I have often listened to friends complaining about difficulties in obtaining repairs from local establishments, even though the article in question is under what appears to be a watertight guarantee. This of course can be very annoying, timewasting, and expensive. The local attitude seems to be that we live in a throw away society, or is it that many of the goods which they sell are bought by tourists passing through who are not expected to return when they encounter problems? A recent experience of mine might illustrate some of the pitfalls which can be encountered. Earlier in the year we bought a small property in France which has no electricity, and little chance in the foreseeable future of any being connected. No matter, we only want to use it as a holiday home and are quite content

to install a 12 volt system. The need was for a reasonably large, but transportable, generator. I thought that I was very fortunate when I found just what I required at Fervalls in St. Coloma. Duly bought, with the assurance of a total guarantee (unfortunately verbal!), the unit was transported to France in mid-May. By mid June it had been used in very short bursts for power tools for about a total of 2 to 3 hours. On June 26th., having purchased a small above ground pool, I switched on the generator to power the filter using 750 watts. After 2 hours running it gave up the ghost - no electricity. I was returning to Andorra on the 28th. to attend the Club A.G.M. so back it came and I delivered it to the suppliers. "No problem, sir. The guarantee covers any problems. Call in tomorrow for more information" I was elated, a company who lived up to their word. The next day I was informed that the problem was the condenser - no problem, covered by guarantee, but it would take a week to obtain a replacement. I returned to France the following day and arranged to collect it two weeks later.

On Tuesday 12th. July I rang the company to check that the generator would be ready for me. I was assured that it would be repaired and ready for collection on the 14th. or 15th. I might mention that during the intervening two weeks I had to hire a generator to enable the plumber to complete his work on our bathroom. Arriving in Andorra on the afternoon of the 13th. I decided to visit the store to obtain an exact time and date for collection.

Consternation! I was greeted by the mechanic who informed me that the generator required a complete rewind and would cost me 40.000 pts. I insisted on talking to someone in higher management. The result - a piece of paper thrust in my hand on which was written in Spanish - 7 days work, 50.000 pts.!

Apart from being aghast I was infuriated. I could sense my temperature rising and control departing, so left with the message that I would return at 10 a.m. the following day with a "legal" representative, and would want to speak to the manager. At 9 a.m. on the 14th. I received a phone call from the company but refused to discuss the situation until we were face to face. We never did see the Manager, except from a great distance, but on arriving were greeted with the information that the problem was now not the windings but THE CONDENSER. Back to square one I thought. But no! Condensers were not covered by guarantee (remember

they had been two weeks previously) and I would have to pay 5.000 pts. After much arguing I agreed to pay this amount if they would supply a letter stating that this payment was being made under pressure, and that after further inquiries to the manufacturers if I was found to

be covered the money would be reimbursed. Whilst this letter was being typed I offered to pay the 5.000 pts. only to be informed that the cost would be much higher since I would have to pay not only for the part but for the hours of the mechanic. As the secretary working this out gradually upped the price to around 20.000 pts. I finally broke and informed them that I was proceeding no further but leaving to go to the Police re the attempt to obtain 50.000 pts from me on false pretences, and then to a Notary to institute civil proceedings. This seemed to have some effect, since they suddenly decided that whilst the cost of the condenser was 5.000 pts. there was only a small amount extra required - a sum of 511 pts. I decided that my best course was to get the generator into my possession and pursue the matter later. I paid the 5.511 pts. and departed after a guarantee that they would contact the manufacturers as soon as possible. On collecting the generator from the workshops I was informed by the mechanic that the real problem had been a loose connection within the machine which had not only blown the condenser whilst I was using it, but had blown a replacement condenser in the workshops. When they discovered this problem they were able to replace the condenser and all was well.

I did not receive a copy of the letter from the manufacturers until I returned in September. It was obvious from this that they had been informed that the problem lay with my use of the generator. In fact both supplier and manufacturer agreed that it had blown whilst I was using it to provide electricity for a deep freeze and a refrigerator - neither of which I own! I wrote to the manufacturers and we have spoken on the phone. I now await a letter from them and hope that I can obtain some justice.

I would like to express my thanks to Carlos of Servissim for his advice and support as my "legal" advisor.

A long, and somewhat involved story which might not help anybody, but it could act as a warning and show you that you must fight. I may have lost the odd round but at least I did not go down on a knock out in the first round!

Tony Hooper.

ANDORRA VIEWED FROM THE TWENTIES:

The Family and Inheritance.

"People visit foreign countries on varying impulses. Some go for fashion....Some to see what other countries have to show - monuments, pictures and cities; these are unlikely to visit Andorra, for the monuments and pictures can be exhausted in about twenty minutes, and of cities, there are none. Others go abroad to see the scenery... but scenery is seldom as magnificent as the pictures would have us believe. There are few people whose chief delight in visiting foreign lands is to study the folk who live there; the people of Andorra will repay study with a wonderful interest. They wear neither their hearts nor their character on their sleeves; but they reveal themselves as intelligent and loveable on deeper investigation."

So wrote Bernard Newman, a much travelled Englishman, in his 1928 book about Andorra. Newman expressed his own opinions freely, and they may or may not be ours today; he calculated that Gaudi's Sarada Familia cathedral in Barcelona, "would not be completed for about fifteen hundred years, which is very satisfactory; and Gaudi's Casa Mila y Camps was absolutely fireproof, which was greatly to be deplored." However, in Andorra, he "held long discussions, not only with the President, but with many others of the General Council", and with many others at all levels.

Other extracts from his work are given below.

"The present population of Andorra of six thousand souls is the maximum that the land can sustain. Every yard of available land is intensively cultivated, and the houses of a village huddle together so as to occupy the minimum of space. Small wonder that land is wealth in Andorra."

"I know of no modern country wherein the family tie is as strong as in Andorra. In Andorra the family is a man's first and last consideration. The State and the Constitution are deliberately built up on the unity and continuity of the family. The "cap de casa" is the Andorran unit. He votes on behalf of the family; he alone is eligible for election to any of the councils of the State or parish; he is automatically a member of the "militia"; he is held responsible for the good conduct of his family. His authority is very real, and his word is law among his own household. The modern relaxation of parental control is unknown in Andorra."

"Suffrage is extended to all heads of households. There is a stipulation that such voters shall be married, but this is quite unnecessary, as an unmarried man would never be nominated as head of his house."

"The cap de casa nominates his successor at the first convenient opportunity - that is to say as soon as a son has proved himself worthy of the honour, not necessarily the eldest son. It is customary for the father to relinquish the title and rights to his "hereu" when he feels the years advancing on him, and the father remains as the honoured guest. The land may not be divided



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between sons; a subdivision of land would be quite impossible in a country with so limited an area of land."

"The lot of a younger son, or "concho", is not a happy one. He has but four choices. He may marry the eldest girl of a family which includes no sons. Unfortunately the supply of heiresses is extremely limited. The priesthood is a favourite profession for Andorran conchos; up to twenty youths a year go to the ecclesiastical seminary at Urgel, a remarkable proportion of the population of Andorra, which is noted for the priests it supplies to northern Spain. Even as far away as Tarragona I met a priest of Andorran birth."

"The third choice of the concho is not an attractive one, to remain in his brother's house. He is virtually a servant, dependent on the head of house for everything. Since he has no home nor money of his own, marriage is impracticable to him. I was not surprised that many younger sons prefer their final choice - emigration to France or Spain. Andorra reached its saturation point in population hundreds of years ago, and a population of five or six thousand is the absolute maximum that the country can possibly support. So it is that Andorra recognised something of Malthusian principles of population some centuries ago.

Neither France nor Spain objected to Andorran immigration, for the Andorran is a better man than his neighbours on either side, and seldom fails to make good."

"An Andorran never forfeits his birthrights. He may leave his country, and may roam over foreign lands. He usually makes good; but if affliction should befall him he may always return to Andorra, and his own people will sustain him for the rest of his life."

"Old Andorra is passing away with increasing celerity. The advance of the last ten years is greater than that of the preceding century. The road has come to Andorra, and new ideas follow the road. Education has come to Andorra, and new ideas follow education. Strangers have come to the country, and new ideas came with them. Can it be that Andorra will soon be a tourist mecca? They tell me that the innkeeper at Encamp has sent his son to the Grand Hotel at Font Romeu, that he may learn the art of the hotelier; then, it is said, he intends to build another Grand Hotel by the side of the little lake at Engoulastes, close by Escaldes with its hot springs.

But most of his fellows do not favour his idea, and it may be that their counsels will prevail. I hope so!"

And did they?

R. H.

A QUICK NIGHT CROSSING

Neatly utilising the forward spring, the dark blue Nelson 40 turned in its own length inside the confines of the marina; gently nosed out into the Medina where the ebb tide would help to carry it into Cowes roads and westwards down the Solent.

Full diesel tanks, levels checked, instruments on, recently scrubbed bottom, reasonably competent crew and good weather forecast with the added bonus of an almost full moon, the Nelson was ready to enjoy a pleasant night run over to France.

Clear of the harbour, mooring warps and fenders stowed away, throttles synchronised to cruising revolutions, the Nelson's V-shaped bows and semi-displacement hull made light work of the Solent chop thrown up by the wind over tide conditions as she took full advantage of the last of the ebb down towards Hurst Narrows, on out to the Bridge of the Needles.

With approaching dusk, the Nelson's navigation lights came on. The crew settled down, in the glow from radar and instrument binnacles, to keep watch as one went below into the galley, with its night-vision protecting red lights, to rustle up hot drinks.

Luck, maybe experienced timing, allowed the Nelson to clear Hurst just before the tide turned to start its run to the East.

Wind, now with the tide, meant a less bumpy passage over the Bridge and a smoother ride across to France. The twin wipers and central Kent screen would have little difficulty coping with the spray.

Crossing the English Channel at night, even with radar and in fair weather, necessitates a good lookout, clear decision making ability and steady nerves.

The Nelson's twin Ford Sabre turbo-charged diesel engines, installed low down and amidships, droned steadily beneath the crew's feet, exhausts blasting out astern, the undeniably loud noise having a strangely soothing effect.

Listening to the R/T, set to dual watch; the crew, all old enough to have benefited from National Service and gained commissions, occasionally smiled sardonically at the verbose banality of the traffic from the other yachts, especially when compared to the patient quiet professionalism of the calm coastguards.

Way points having been set up on the Decca Navigator before leaving the marina: the Nelson's human navigator plotted her position on the chart every twenty minutes, just in case.

Steered on automatic pilot most of the time, the helmsman altered course to pass astern of the almost continuous succession of merchantmen and the occasional yacht. Despite her brightly burning running lights and radar reflector, the Nelson's crew knew better than to assume that she had been seen, simpler to make a small alteration of course in good time.

The sky was already beginning to lighten in the East as the Nelson thundered past CH1, that all too well known mark off the French coast, tracking straight for Cherbourg Harbour's western entrance.

Entering the outer harbour, the Nelson's engines were throttled back to allow her to quietly make her way into the yacht marina where with exhausts burbling gently, engines at tick-over, she slipped into a vacant visitor's berth. Having secured to an arm of the marina, her ancillary equipment and engine shut down, the Nelson's crew enjoyed a traditional English breakfast below in the shelter of the saloon, whilst laying for gastronomic, and other, adventures ashore.

All very different from the days of their not totally misspent youth when the crew passed long cold wet

hours, in sometimes less than completely watertight oilskins, on the weather rails of sailing yachts beating to windward across the same, seemingly much wider, stretch of water, then turning off the French coast, the many and varied delights of France tantalising close, to race home again; not necessarily better, different!

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MOUNTAIN LORE.

I was very saddened during my holiday in France this year to learn of the death of a Club member whilst out walking in the mountains and realised that this was something which could happen to anyone at any time. The sad incident started me thinking and I feel that my professional experience could help to avert a similar tragedy in the future.

First the credentials. I have been a qualified Physical Education teacher for 40 years. During one period of my career I was very involved with outdoor activities. This was a period when the authorities came to realise



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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that parties of schoolchildren, or any other kind of group, should not gaily take off for the hills without some thought of what could go wrong. It was in this climate of opinion that I ran an Outdoor Activities Centre in the Berwyn Mountains of Wales. Hammered into me on courses I attended was SAFETY FIRST, SAFETY SECOND AND SAFETY ALWAYS!

Many of our residents come to Andorra without a lifetime history of outdoor activity, perhaps from a rather sedentary occupation with an occasional walk or jog round the block. Now suddenly they have time on their hands, are living in a beautiful country, and have the challenge of the mountains. Great, take advantage of it and do those things that you have always dreamed about. You will never be Hilary or Tensing but you can feel the same thrill of achievement. But remember that when they conquered Everest they were fit and very safety conscious.

A small story may illustrate my concern for safety. Walking in the Berwyns with a party of 12 teenagers at Easter time we were fully equipped for most emergencies, much to the disgust of the lads who had to carry what they considered extra equipment on what was a beautiful sunny spring day. On the path to the col. there were many people who had arrived at the foot of the mountain and, because of the fine weather, had decided to climb onto the shoulder of the mountain dressed in very light clothing. Now even in Wales the weather can change very quickly, and looking across towards Bala Lake I could see a cold front coming in fast from the west. We quickly made our way over the shoulder of the mountain to the east side where we could take shelter. Within 15 minutes a snow storm had swept in and some 10 cms. of snow fell very quickly. We had no problems, being equipped to meet this kind of change, but a number of the "tourists" had to be rescued.

That true story was set in Wales at a height of 2.000 ft. Here in Andorra we are dealing with mountains of 2.000 metres plus, and the weather can, and does,

change just as dramatically. So, like the Boy Scout, **BE PREPARED.**

A few rules and tips which are applicable in any wild country:

1. NEVER walk alone. Always walk with a partner, and for real safety in a group of three or more.
2. Inform someone of your trip with an ETA. If you are delayed but are able to communicate with the person you informed, do so!
3. Carry a First Aid bag or box. In it should be at least some essentials like cream, (for sun & bites), plasters, scissors, tablets for headaches etc. tweezers for removing foreign bodies (not the French or the Spanish!), and other items which you think are necessary.
4. Even on the hottest day carry warm clothing, including a hat of some kind. Remember that there is a temperature drop as you climb which you might not notice until too late.
5. Carry at least one SPACE BLANKET in the group. A development from the space programme, this is used today by all experienced mountaineers. You have all seen them being wrapped round the shoulders of the runners after the London, and other, Marathons. Very small in folded size, taking up about as much room as a bar of chocolate, they are also very inexpensive and can be obtained from any outdoor activities shop. I have seen them in stock in St. Coloma. And they could save your life.
6. Mention of chocolate above reminds me that it is a good idea to carry an emergency supply of chocolate or something similar.

Finally an "aid memoire" - **S I N C E F.**

S = Safety blanket.

I = Inform someone.

N = Never walk alone.

C = Clothing - warm.

E = Emergency food i.e. chocolate.

F = First Aid.

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One further thing to remember. Always take a map of the area with you AND a compass. A cloud or mist can soon restrict your visibility, and you could get lost or even wander into a very dangerous situation. Oh, and yes, do learn how to use the compass first, it is too late when you are already lost!

I hope that I have not been a Job's comforter, but I hope that these few words will encourage everyone taking to the mountains to be **SAFETY CONSCIOUS**. Enjoy them and come back to tell us about your adventures.

Tony Hooper.

HELICOPTER TRIP AUGUST 7TH. 1994

12.30. Moments later we heard the sound of our helicopter approaching from its base at La Massana. I'm told that it was a LAMA SA3, and it holds the world altitude record. Tense excitement as it swirled around and settled down with perfect precision. What many had not anticipated was the fact that the "rotor blades" continue to rotate at the same speed as in flight thus causing dust to fly in all directions and people to fly into and behind the cars to seek shelter. Ann had already organised us into groups of four - five persons including the pilot being the maximum load for any one trip. Lift off was very gentle but soon we were twisting and turning as the helicopter gained height, some wondering would we even survive the perilous flight. Five minutes later the pilot put us down just outside the Comapedrosa Refuge and we were all in one piece even if the adrenaline was working overtime.



Sunday August 7th. was thankfully a good clear day so no excuse for faint hearted souls to chicken out. Some of us had experience of flying in helicopters already, but not necessarily in the mountains.

Obviously for the majority it was to be a first time thrill, albeit not without a degree of apprehension.

We assembled in the bottom ski park at Arinsal around

A deep breath while we took in the beauty of our surroundings; then off to see the lake before lunch, or in the case of the really active a walk and picnic before 2.30 when Desmond gave a very learned talk on how helicopters work. Meanwhile the less active - most of us - lunched in the refuge, and very good it was too; lamb



chops, sausages and excellent chips, not to mention sweets and plenty of wine.

The refuge is an amazing place and caters not only for stranded climbers but offers accommodation for upward of 60 people who may wish to stay overnight and explore further afield. There are two dormitories with at least 30 beds in each, and food is always available.

The helicopter returned to collect us about 4.15 but there was still plenty of time to exchange reactions about the outward flight. Without exception, everyone seemed delighted that they had been sufficiently brave to embark on such an adventure. One of us looking back into the valley up which we had come was heard to say, "It can't be nearly as bad going down!" little did she know!

And so to the return trip via Pic Negre and the Arinsal Ski Station. Again a very smooth lift off followed by a short hop across the trout lake. At this point nerves of steel were required as our excellent pilot, Jean-Pierre, appeared to be flying straight into the mountainside, only to lift us to safety and then repeat the dose twice more. Then over the summit a spectacular sight was awaiting. Far below were the Arinsal ski slopes spread out and looking as flat as a pancake, indeed a dramatic sight and so back to base. It really was a wonderful

day. No doubt some of us were relieved to have survived

such an experience, but most of us surely cannot wait for the next time round. During the course of the day many splendid photographs were taken.

Yet again and as always we do want Ann and Desmond to know how very much we appreciate all they do for us. Thank you both a lot.

P & G.C

Nicer by Foix off the highway to Andorra

All day every day and most of the night 'most every night, the *camions* - great, hulking transport trucks - grunt and grumble their ponderous way along Route N20 in south-western France up into the Pyrenees toward the tiny, prosperous principality of Andorra. And down again.

Andorra's affluence is all out of proportion to its size - 465 square kilometres and about 50,000 inhabitants. The place is a magnet for bargain hunters. A nation-sized K-mart? You could call it that.

The *camions* on the mountain highway, which is the only way in and out, are interspersed with tourist buses and carloads of French locals. And here's a biker, his jacket somewhat incongruously proclaiming, "Harley Owners Group - Loire Valley Chapter". The N20 is *not* the road less travelled. It's two lanes of misery for kilometre after kilometre, with few places to pass the slower traffic. And there's always lots of slower traffic. But the road to Paradise should not be easy. Only those devout enough to suffer should attain their goal - and a plate of the best fried egg and chips this side of a Lancashire transport "café".

For Andorra is indeed a Mecca, a "must visit" spot more than 2,400 metres above sea level, noted these days less for its Romanesque churches and the bleak splendour of its scenic vistas than for its fine duty-free shopping complexes and sprawling roadside restaurants, where the deep-fryers never sleep. You don't speak the language? Don't worry. They speak yours and can cope with most currencies, though they prefer French francs or Spanish pesetas. Or plastic.

At its worst - or best, depending on where you're coming from and what you're coming for - Andorra is a sort of cross between a truck stop and the international departure lounge of an airport where no one ever flies anywhere. They just load up their cars and drive home again, clutching their cheap booze, thinking fond thoughts of the cut-price microwave oven in the trunk and hoping they aren't pulled over by one of the French Customs' mobile roadside spot checks.

Not much chance of that, though. Many are called to Andorra but few are chosen for official scrutiny as they descend from the mountains with their booty. The expression "home free" could've been coined for this place.

So go there. Go by all means. But spare at least a glance, an hour, a day, as you pass the foothills town of Foix with its impossibly grandiose motto, "Touch me if you dare" - *Tocas y si gausus* - borrowed from Gaston Fébus, Gaston III, most famous of the ancient counts of Foix-Béarn. He took his last name from Phoebus, a.k.a. Apollo, god of the sun. No image or self-esteem hang-ups here.

Strange guy, old Gaston. A complex man, a product of the 14th century who lived during the Hundred Years War. He was a noted poet and singer, devoted to the finer arts of the time, and a passionate hunter who wrote what became a standard work on the subject. He also bumped off both his son and brother, no doubt for what he considered to be perfectly adequate reasons. No one was about to ask awkward questions, that's for sure.

He had a nice place, too, the Chateau de Foix. That's chateau as in castle, rather than chateau as in big, fancy house. Big, fancy castle. It wound up being used in the past century as a prison.

The first foundations were laid a good 1,000 years ago and in its heyday, the chateau stretched for blocks across the city. Now only about 25 per cent remains, including the three towers for which the chateau is most famous. Glance to your right as you're heading, lemming-like, up into the mountains to Andorra, or to your left as you're toting back your half-price, multi-function phone, and you'll see them rising above the brick-red roofs of the old town.

Cross the Ariège river into Foix and they'll let you *climb* the towers - two of them anyway - for a very fine view indeed, and also see a bed in which Henry IV reputedly slept. Not very well, by the rumpled look of it. There's

the skeleton too, of what the guidebook says is a mammoth.

Looks more like a bear to these eyes, a creature which used to flourish in the Pyrenees and provide sport for Gaston and his hunting cronies.

Entrance to the chateau costs 20 francs. The sign at the bottom of the hill says 30 but once you've made the climb to the gate, it's as if you've proved the seriousness of your intent and they knock 10 francs off. Or perhaps they're operating on the Andorran principle that no one pays full whack for anything and that's how we'll all get rich.

From the chateau, you can watch the *parapentes* - half parachute, half hang-glider - taking off from the higher foothills and soaring along the ridges. You'll find yourself wondering how it feels and wanting to try it, telling yourself, "One of these days..."

Now that you're off the N20 and into the town, you may as well have a bite of lunch. The Hotel Lons on the place Georges-Duthil offers a good 67-franc menu, a decent house rosé and a pleasant view from its terrace tables of the river, and yes, that same N20, which you may now begin to see as the road to acquisitionist hell, rather than tourist heaven.

You may turn for home, avoiding the main drag (and boy, is it ever) and head off across the quietly spectacular back roads, past the ruin at Roquefixarde of the 11th century castle. The local boast is that during the Albigensian Crusade of the 13th century, bent upon eradicating the Cathar brand of Christianity, the castle served as a refuge for local Cathars, and never fell to the Crusaders, as did others within view.

You can climb up to it, still, the work of a sweaty half hour or so, and be rewarded with a truly magnificent view, possibly the best in this part of the Pyrenees.

Roquefixarde was demolished in the 16th century as outdated and uneconomic. Obsolescence knows no boundaries of time. So you'd better get back into your car now and hurry that Andorran bargain-basement IBM "knockoff" computer home before it too, is out of date.

But don't worry. They'll happily sell you another, newer one next week. And egg and chips, too, if you didn't have the foresight to eat in Foix. Which would've been a Foix, Foix better thing to do.

This article appeared in The Toronto Star (Toronto, Canada) newspaper on Saturday October 8, 1994 and was sent to a Canadian in Andorra who contacted the writer, Bill Taylor. Firstly for approval to reprint the article, but more importantly, to track down those great eggs and chips! Bill Taylor says that the "caff" is a must on his friends' trips to Andorra but ... he doesn't remember the café's name, but he says that it's right after you arrive in Andorra... which puts us *somewhere* in Pas de la Casa! So the question remains, where ARE those infamous eggs and chips?!

TARRAGONA.

Tarragona experienced a deluge, the worst the city ever had, the Monday before our planned trip. Television and newspapers said it was a disaster area.

Juanito, our faithful driver, kept in touch with the situation. Thursday Ann Price and Desmond Allen called the hotel and were told the floods had receded and the situation was now normal.

In the damp morning mist at 0715 Friday Juanito met the first group in Arinsal, completing the roundup in St. Julia about 0830. Fog shrouded us eerily on the drive through Seu de Urgell and on until we neared the reservoir, where the water had risen 20 metres. A welcome sight after the low water mark seen just a week before.

Ann woke the sleepers to introduce Juanito, Desmond Allen, Josefina Martinez and Doreen Woolton to those who did not know them, and thanked each for helping for what promised to be a great tour. Ann and Josefina distributed reams of paper and maps detailing the history and layout of Tarragona, while Desmond gave individual help regarding landmarks on the maps.

Near Constanti we left the highway, drove past a new village of flats in the middle of nowhere, went along dirt roads through desolate country. Juanito stopped the bus. Surely we must be lost. On alighting, off to the right we saw the ruins of the Mausoleo Romano de Centcellas, which is Spain's finest Paleo-Christian monument. The Roman Villa was converted into a basilica dedicated to St. Bartholomew.

North of Tarragona we saw the Rui Francoli, unbelievable debris littered the landscape where the river had receded. Trees uprooted by the rush of water were scattered like discarded match sticks.

We continued on to the Hotel Imperial Tarraco. You can see the Roman Amphitheatre from the hotel. Tarraco is the name the Romans called the city.

After lunch we divided into two groups, one led by Josefina and the other by Doreen. Both entered the old town through the Placa Del Rei, passing the first century B.C. Praetorian, now a museum, said to be the home of Pontius Pilate. In the basement are tunnels which led to the Roman Circus. To understand how well built these ruins are, during the Spanish Civil War, prisoners were held there. Will any of our structures be standing in 4000 A.D.

Josefina took her group on a leisurely walk through the Cathedral, begun in the 12th. century and finished in the 15th., where we viewed the cat which pretended to sleep, but jumped and devoured the rodents, much like an Iberian Pied Piper. They then toured the Cathedral Museum and bought artefacts.

For the more vigorous, Doreen led a walk along the outside of the walls laid originally by the Iberians with

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massive blocks of stone. The next layer was built by the Romans, who by the 2nd. century A.D. had swelled the population to 30,000. Finally, during the War of Spanish Succession, the English added the third tier. Doreen pointed out the present-day flats which are built into, the old walls. There is a battle raging against those who want to dispossess the occupants to restore the walls. Members of the group had a lively discussion about the disagreement, and came down on the side of the owners.

That evening Juanito drove us to the Port. We descended, twenty five or so strong, on the hapless waiters in a fish restaurant. As we crowded into the door, a few decided to avoid the crush and walked in search of another place. All were pleased with the variety of seafood and the low cost in each restaurant.

At the appointed time we walked to the waterfront where Juanito awaited. He and Doreen showed us where concrete blocks and cars were lifted and moved great distances by the flood waters. The river had recently been re-routed, which caused the full force of the deluge to hit the city. Owners of shops and fish stores were bailing water out of their premises as we watched.

Saturday morning, sated with a hearty breakfast, we boarded the bus for more adventure. Passing the Rui Francoli going north, we saw different vistas of the damage the flood wrought. Juanito stopped the bus 4 kms. from Tarragona. Walking through a dark tunnel we emerged on the other side of the highway. From that vantage point we had an unobstructed view of the two tiered Roman Aqueduct de Puente de Diablo.

On then to Vilafranca del Penedes for a tour of the Torres winery. The family has grown grapes since the 17th. century and run the winery since 1870. Doreen stumbled on the shooting of footage for television and was fortunate to talk with one of the owners, Miguel A.

Torres. A short film, tour of the vineyards by bus and the museum gave a wealth of information about growing grapes. Especially interesting was the grafting of imported vines to strengthen local varieties which were blighted by disease in the past.

After the wine tasting we were given a small glass as a memento. Much fun was had with the porro and the wine flowed freely. We bought out all the copies of "The Catalan Country Kitchen" by Marimar Torres, who runs the family winery in California. The mood was joyous when we set off to explore the town and the farmer's market. Everyone wandered in a different direction in search of a good restaurant.

A tired group met at the bus at 1630 and were ready for a restful drive. In a lovely gesture, Ann gave Maria Teresa Raurell a bouquet for her onomastica, 15th. October. Dinner presented another bit of merriment. The waitress did not come to work at the Fonda Guardiola in Guardiola de Bergueda, the owners were short handed. Aside from their local trade on a Saturday

night, their service was complicated by 41 of us having a complete choice of menu. True to form, Ann and Desmond did yeoman's work by asking for a show of hands each time the owners appeared with a particular dish, avoiding confusion, speeding the service and making light of what in less experienced hands could have been a disaster. Laughing and joking ensued and, in another "Ann touch", a tin of Cadbury chocolates was passed to round off a delightful, fun filled feast.

Driving home Juanito sang, then we sang. We were treated to a duet by Solveig Feilberg and Desmond Allen. People of twelve nationalities, American, Australian, Canadian, Catalan, Danish, English, Norwegian, Scottish, Spanish, Swiss and Welsh were deposited at their respective stops in Andorra. Tired Juanito let the last off the coach at 0130 in Arinsal. It was as cold and damp as yesterday morning when we

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The Editors

started. Our concerns about the floods were unfounded. All went well, and we thank Ann and Desmond for an exceptional experience.

Laura Fecanin.

WINTER IN ANDORRA

(Following several requests, we are including another abridged extract from "The Road to Andorra" by Shirley Deane, her account of a year spent in Anyos in the 1950's.)

Now winter was upon us, and there was frost on the village dunghill on the way to the church. It sparkled, a thing of beauty - the rich, dark dung and the silver frost - a magic transformation. Icicles hung from the bare tracery of the boughs, and cavities in the river rocks were solid pools of ice. The tadpoles in the drinking trough, which had been twisting and gyrating in their hundreds all the autumn and providing good protein for

the horses, hurried to change into frogs, and escape before the trough was frozen over.

Winter in Andorra had its own beauty and its own movement. For now, while the women of the mountains finished preparing for their annual hibernation, their sausages hanging from the rafters, their green stuff stored, the men of the family began the serious business of smuggling. Smuggling is primarily a winter occupation, a way of making money and passing the time when snow lies heavy on the ground. As Norwegian farmers fish in winter to augment their income, and the Swiss carve wooden toys, so good

Andorrans work in the fields while it is possible and smuggle when it is not.

Smuggling has no moral stigma in the Valleys. It is a game played by amateurs as well as by professionals, by the respectable farming families who are the backbone of the country. It is a schoolboy game of cops and robbers, and this attitude is shared, like the profits, with the police. On the Spanish frontier, the Guardia Civil patrols the mountains. It is the smuggler's part of the game to avoid the guards, sneaking past them with his little train of donkeys through the snow. If he is caught,

he loses nothing but his goods, which the police then sell for their own profit. Usually he is neither fined nor imprisoned unless an officer happens to be with the patrol, when sometimes for the look of the thing the smuggler may be apprehended. Then, probably, the officer alone benefits from the goods.

All night long, nylons, medicines, foodstuffs, bicycle and car parts, and even bags of gold jog across the mountains in a never-ending stream. We used to hear the muffled pad of hooves, the creak of saddlebags, and sometimes - leaning from our window in the moonlight - we saw the long-eared silhouettes of donkeys, dark against the snow. There can be few Andorrans who do not take part in some way, small or large, in the national racket, so that even the poorest of them is comparatively prosperous. Theirs is the triumph of cunning over strength. Once again Andorra takes its smallness, and its precarious geographical position, and turns them into assets.

A mysterious man moved into the attic above us, to spend the winter.

"He comes every year," said Senyor Joan, feeling that some explanation was necessary.

"And what does he do?"

Senyor Joan thought for a moment.

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"He is a woodman," he said at last.

I took by cue from him and asked no more questions, but I could not help reflecting that the woodman cut his wood at funny hours. We used to hear him stirring at midnight, clattering over the bare boards, and thumping large objects round the attic. Then, about 1 a.m., he left the house, returning towards dawn or perhaps the next evening. But we never glimpsed the man himself - he was just a clatter of footsteps on the boards, a cough vanishing into the night, and sometimes the sound of a harmonica, softly and sweetly playing before his journey began. It was the only music I ever

heard in the village, and - like the man himself - it did not belong there.

Our friend Toni disappeared for a time from Les Escaldes. Once, when we went to call on him in his remote little tourist office which did its best to hide itself from tourists, we found that the lock had been broken from the door. A few weeks later, a new lock was in position and Toni was behind his desk, as sleek and prosperous as ever.

"Where have you been?" asked Malcolm.

"I've been for a little holiday - to France," he answered with a wink.

In Andorra this is a euphemism for being in goal, so we offered our condolences.

"Was it very grim?" I asked sympathetically.

Tony looked surprised.

"About the same as usual," he replied. "There's quite a decent restaurant attached to the goal, you know. They specialise in lobster - bring them fresh every day from Marseilles. And their pâté is out of this world."

The restaurant services are available, of course, only for those with the money to pay for them. The ordinary goal fare, Toni assured us with a shudder, didn't bear thinking of. He had been caught this time with cognac in his car - one hundred litres of it swishing fragrantly about in the special tank built underneath the body. French cognac sells legally in Andorra without tax for much less than it costs in France, so it pays to buy it legally in Andorra and smuggle it illegally back again to France - one of the many economic curiosities of the modern world.

In Andorra a perfectly legal little transaction - perhaps because it is unusual - can cause far more trouble than an illegal one. I found this out for myself when a well-meaning friend sent my son a parcel for his birthday at the end of November. It was too heavy to come by post, so one day a postman staggered across the mountains in the snow with a little piece of paper to say that the parcel was waiting at the nearest railway station, which happened to be at Tour de Carol, in France. There was, he said, no possible way of having the parcel sent into Andorra - one of us would have to pick it up in person.

When I made enquiries, I found that the road from Andorra to France had already been closed for nearly a

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month, but there were rumours that if the fine spell continued, it might be opened up again for a day or two. Of course if it snowed during the journey, the bus company informed me, I should have to remain in France like the parcel, or make the long, expensive journey south to the coast, across the frontier there to Barcelona and up to Andorra on the other side. It all seemed very difficult but when the telephone lady of Anyos brought me a message from the bus company to say that they had sent a snowplough through, and would be running a bus next day, I succumbed to the look of tragedy in Christopher's eyes. I decided not to get a visa, however, trusting to the kindness or, better still, the ignorance of the French frontier guard; for, after all, I

argued, they could not have too many Australians crossing the border at Pas de la Casa and may not know the rules. Or I could pretend not to know them myself.

Senyora Joan agreed to feed the children in my absence and I started off next day at 5 a.m. in pitch darkness for my two-hour walk to the capital - for the la Massana bus did not start to run until seven, at which time the snow-bus was due to leave for France. It was an eerie walk alone in the darkness, with nothing but the sound of running, falling waters, the endless music of the melting snows. I arrived, panting, in Andorra la Vella at exactly 7 a.m., and there was no sign of the bus, nor indeed of anyone at all. I paced up and down, freezing gently and admiring the sunrise over the mountains, until eight o'clock, when the baker crossed the square. He had not heard if the bus had gone, nor even that a bus was going. By nine I was just deciding to take the journey home when a bus shot into the square, paused for the briefest moment and started off again. I scrambled aboard as it passed me, and we were almost at Encamp before I had breath enough to confirm that it was going to France.

The bus was empty when we started, but soon it was picking up mysterious bands of workmen from

nowhere, and dropping them down again for no apparent reason. A priest, too, got on and then got off, though at neither stopping place was there a house, nor any sign of life.

The road was fantastic - great piles of snow thrown up along the edges by the snowplough, ten or twelve feet deep. The snow-poles which lined the road, with gaily painted red and yellow tops, were just visible. The road itself, though cleared of loose snow, was frozen, and we crawled along with snow-chains on the bus, and a great

drop always on one side. On the land side, which we mercifully hugged, wooden hurdles supported, theoretically at least, huge threatening piles of snow, prevented only by the rotting wood from avalanching over us as we passed by. Sometimes, the piles trembled and shuddered ominously with the vibration of the bus.

At Tour de Carol, where the bus normally waited for half an hour, I entered the station office. The only official available spoke neither French nor Spanish, but only Catalan, which is spoken equally on both sides of the border. I had to ask the bus driver to translate for me. The official asked an incredible number of questions, examined my passport from front to back but fortunately did not realise that I was there illegally, anyway - I doubt if he could read in any language. There was the parcel, tantalisingly displayed on a shelf behind him. What was it, he asked. I explained that I did not know, that it was a birthday present for my son. "But it can't be released until you declare it," he said.

"All right, I'll open it now and declare it."

"But I can't let you open it until you declare what's in it," he replied. "You must first tell me what it is."

I craned my necks to look at the parcel - it was the wrong shape for books, so it was obviously a toy of some kind.

"It's an aeroplane -" I said with emphasis, and added kindly, "a toy one."

He was suspicious.

"Are you sure?"

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"No, of course not - I haven't the faintest idea. But let's say it's an aeroplane."

He scratched his head - it was all highly irregular.

"Yes, that's right, it's an aeroplane," said the bus driver, helpful but impatient.

It was almost time for the bus to leave.

The official took his word for it more readily than mine, and laboriously wrote "Aeroplane" on several forms. (It was in fact, as time disclosed, a boat.) I signed innumerable documents in triplicate, stating my name, sex, religion, the names of my parents and grandparents, my place of birth, etc. It all seemed very exotic and improbable to the official. Why should an Australian from Andorra be picking up a toy aeroplane from England (which was actually a boat) in a little town in France?

But at last the forms were completed, and I paid over a large sum of francs, which I had prudently changed from pesetas at Pas de la Casa. They were, the official explained vaguely, customs duty.

"Now," I said with a sigh of relief, "hand me the parcel."

He looked scandalised.

"Not so fast, madame," he said, "we must first clear the customs form."

"Well, come on, let's clear it, then. The bus is waiting."

"But there's no one here with authority to do that, madame. The customs official is at Ax-le-Therme."

"But I can't go there," I told him horrified, visions of more and more vanishing francs in my mind. "I'd have to stay all night."

"You could stay here instead," he suggested helpfully.

"We could get the form back for you by tomorrow or the day after."

Neither my brief glimpse of Tour de Carol, nor the state of my purse, recommended this course. I made speeches in French, Spanish, English and even in Italian, stating my displeasure with the French railways in general and with him in particular. I painted a harrowing picture of my little son's tears when I returned empty-handed. I was almost in tears myself -

tears of rage and frustration. The driver helped in Catalan, in quite a rage himself, as the bus was now half an hour late in leaving. But nothing would shake the official.

The driver, desperate at the delay, finally suggested that he should pick the parcel up for me and bring it to Andorra when the necessary formalities were completed, if the road remained open that long. It took us some time, and several more forms in triplicate signed by both the driver and myself, to persuade the official to agree to this new irregularity. But at last it was arranged and I returned to the impatient bus, convinced that I would never see the parcel again.

But surprisingly it did turn up two weeks later. A mysterious phone call came to Anyos from the postmistress in Sant Julia de Loria, to say that she had a parcel addressed to us. How it reached Sant Julia we never discovered but after another bus trip to collect it, we at last put the much-travelled overland boat into Christopher's hands.

(The above account appeals to your editor because thirty years on the same frustrating procedure was continuing. Just before Christmas 1981 (or maybe '82) she received a note in her letter box stating that a large parcel from England was waiting to be collected at Tour de Carol. No amount of appealing to the post-office availed. The parcel had to be collected in person.

Fortunately, unlike Mrs. Deane, she had a car but the weather was equally bad that year. The journey to Tour de Carol and back took over eight hours and was only possible because she was lucky enough to come up behind a snowplough at Pas behind which she crawled all the way to Tour de Carol at about five kilometres an hour. Without it, she would certainly never have reached her destination since visibility was down to a few metres and the snow was piling up as fast as it was cleared.

Like Shirley Deane, she was unable to take the parcel back with her but it, too, eventually turned up. After



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that, she suggested to her family that they should not bother sending Christmas presents!)

CHRISTMAS RECIPE

Cranberry Nut Bread

If you feel like something plain but seasonal, after too much Christmas cake and pudding, then try the following recipe. (When they are in season, bilberries (blueberries) can be substituted for the cranberries)

Ingredients

- 250g. (8 oz.) plain flour
- 250 g. (8 oz.) caster sugar
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 50 g. (2 oz.) butter
- 120 ml. (4 fl. oz.) orange juice
- 1 tablespoon grated orange rind
- 1 egg, beaten
- 50 g. (2 oz.) walnuts, chopped
- 250 g. (8 oz.) fresh cranberries, chopped

Sift the flour, sugar, baking powder, soda and salt into a mixing bowl. Rub in the butter thoroughly, then beat in the orange rind and juice and egg. Fold in the nuts and cranberries.

Pour the batter into a greased 1 kg. (2 lb.) loaf tin. Bake in a preheated moderate oven, 180° C (350° F), Gas Mark 4, for 1 hour or until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Cool in the tin.

Makes one 1 kg. (2 lb.) tea loaf

A PLEA FROM THE TREASURER

It seems that some members have complained that they receive reminders about their subscriptions when they have not had an invoice for the amount due or that they receive a second reminder without having had a first. I record on my computer the date all letters are posted to

members. What I can't guarantee is that my letters will be delivered. Would you please recover the envelope from the waste bin and check to make sure that your address is correct and also complete.

Also we desperately need someone to help with Advertising for Intercomm Is there no-one who can help with a few hours each year? We would be prepared to pay a small commission and reasonable expenses. It would be a great pity if we were forced to reduce the size or quality of your magazine through lack of advertising revenue.

CHRISTMAS WORD PLAY QUIZ

for naturalists and others.

All question in this quiz should be easy for crossword enthusiasts. They contain a "cryptic" clue to a bird's name followed by a factual reference to some aspect of the bird's appearance, habitat, distribution or behaviour. The number of letters in the answer is given after each question. All the birds can be seen in Andorra

- 1) Second letter wandering - in winter (9).
- 2) Sounds like a busy bee - or a cat (7).
- 3) Dark and stormy - but still singing (11).
- 4) Is back to hide at bird tables in winter (6).
- 5) Accept as a true summer visitor (7).
- 6) Big in the sky and below the surface (6).
- 7) Ride this horse for an obsessive catcher of House Martins (5).
- 8) Union ban on 'plane makes a scavenger (5,4).
- 9) Sounds like half a child's train is black (6).
- 10) Dwelling place for a boxing bout before the argument, introduced world-wide (5,7).
- 11) Initially tenth makes eggs (3)
- 12) Husky measure is one of the commonest (9).

The answers are on page 20.

VIATGES



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Answers to Christmas Word Play Quiz

- 1) B-rambling
- 2) Buzz-ard
- 3) Night-in-gale
- 4) Sis-kin
- 5) Swallow
- 6) Dipper
- 7) Hobby
- 8) Black Kite
- 9) Chough
- 10) House Sparrow
- 11) Jay
- 12) Chaff-inch

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