

# **INTER A COMM**

**CLUB INTERNACIONAL D'ANDORRA**

**MAGAZINE / REVISTA**



**VOL. 6 - NÚM. 1 - AUTUMN / TARDOR 1996**



# CLUB INTERNACIONAL D'ANDORRA

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# INTERCOMM

## Club Internacional d'Andorra

Quarterly Magazine

### September 1996

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#### NEWS FROM THE BOARD

by Tony Hooper

Congratulations must be extended to those members responsible for organising two events which were held in the last week of June.

First we had the ART GROUP EXHIBITION, in Ordino, organised by Nina O'Brien and the group members. The opening was marked by the attendance of a large number of Club members and others, and, I am informed, many people visited during the three days of the exhibition. The Art Group must be congratulated on the high standard of the works on show

On Sunday 23rd June we held our annual Car Boot Sale in the Arinsal car park. Unfortunately, the weather was not kind, but the event, organised by Caroline Friis-Pederson and Ann Price, was again a huge success.

Well done to everyone associated with these events, but the very important aspect of their success was the amount of coverage we received from the local media. For three days, every Andorra TV news broadcast carried cover of one or the other of them. In the week before, the radio stations carried reports and interviews. Whilst the Club has always received some notice from the press in the past, I believe that over the

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last year the media has at last accepted that we are a part of life in Andorra.

At the AGM, a question was raised regarding the amount of money the Club holds in its account. I hope members will be interested to know how some of this money has been used recently.

The Club underwrote *Una Nit de Musica i Dansa* for 25,000 pta, the Art Group reception for 15,000 pta, and made a grant to the Bridge Group to establish a new bridge group in St. Julia. One other thing to remember is that if we failed to obtain any revenue from advertising, the cost to the Club of this magazine would be 500,000 pta per year - half of our "reserve".

## EDITORIAL

by Margaret Shaida

As you know, there's nothing new under the sun. As an editor, however, I like to think that I can always produce something new and interesting for you to read in your magazine. It came as a bit of a shock, therefore, when I noticed that a couple of items appearing in this issue, had already appeared in the *Intercomm* of some three years ago. Of course, they're not *exactly* the same: the report in this issue (page 9) on the Club's visit to Aguestortes was written by a different person (John Berthoud), and the trip took place at a different time of the year.

And on page 20, there is a feature on the changes we have seen in modern English during the past half century. Well, in the Winter 1993 issue of *Intercomm*, there was a letter from Joan Spiller which briefly referred to the very same differences.

Well, of course, the seasons of the year keep coming around, and the language changes with each passing year, so I doubt I can do much about it.

In this issue, for instance, we have a report on the 1996 Car Boot Sale (page 10) by Caroline Friis-Pedersen. Some aspects of this year's Car Boot Sale were in fact quite different to last year - this June saw a bitterly cold wind whipping down from the mountains, and everyone well wrapped up and hoping for a place in the sun. Last year, you will recall, the shade under the single tree was packed with people, and the cold drinks sellers were rushed off their feet.

Other reports on Club Activities include the Dinner at the Micolau by Betty Pilkington (page 8), the visit to Barcelona by Ralph MacLachlan (page 11), and the lyrical experience of a day trip to Castellar N'Hug by Bob Muir (page 12). We also have a report (page 18) on two sturdy warriors who walked from Andorra to the Mediterranean last July. Such a feat seems nothing short of a miracle to a desk-bound computer freak such as yours truly. But if you *are* a walker, keep an eye open for the small-flowered Willow-herb which, apparently, has miraculous healing powers (see page 16).

For the benefit of those who were unable to attend the Club Dinner at the Micolau, we give brief excerpts from Dinah's humorous talk on her experiences as a doctor (page 19).

And don't forget, there may still be some tickets for an evening with Lord Yehudi Menuhin, celebrating his eightieth year here in Andorra (further details can be found on page 7).

Lastly, if you have a favourite restaurant, why not share your discovery with other CIA members? We should be delighted to hear from you about this or about anything else! Please write and let us know what you think, to the Editor, P O Box 291, Credit Andorra, Escaldes.

Any views or information contained in this magazine need not necessarily reflect the views of the Board or the Editorial Committee.

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## NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

### INTERNATIONAL SINGERS

Help! MEN! We need you! Christmas is just over the horizon and so, sadly, is multi-gifted Mike Stone (he's returned to UK and will be sorely missed). Since my last appeal, just ONE guy has come forward. That's not enough to sing the *Messiah*. So come on, don't be shy, give us a ring. We start rehearsals with the male voices in October, at first once a week on Tuesdays from 4-6 pm. Later, we add a second practice which is arranged to suit as many people as possible.

As always, we've been a bit on the thin side this summer but we've enjoyed a lot of laughs, as well as some hard work with "Summer Time" and "Scarborough Fair" among new pieces shaping up nicely. But of course, the more members we have the better, so, women singers, too, why not give us a try!

Phone Binnie Segal 836296 or Brenda Ross 836886 for more information.

### SCOTTISH DANCING

We'll be re-starting on Sunday, October 6th at 4.30 pm in the La Massana church hall. Neither previous experience nor Scottish blood are needed for two hours of excellent exercise for both mind and body. Bring flat-soled shoes and 100 pts (for parish charity) and give it a whirl.

Ring Brenda Ross 836996, or Clare Allcard 836269 after first October.

### THE DRAMA GROUP

Because of lack of success in attracting new members, the unavailability of several performers through absence or changed circumstances, and especially because of the lack of the persuasive and creative powers of Ron Richards, the

Committee has decided with great regret to render the Drama Group inactive.

We have of course significant material assets - a healthy financial situation, a lot of scenery, and numerous costumes and props - but for the time being the Group does not have the "people assets" to carry on a comprehensive programme.

At any time, we shall be glad to hear from existing or new members with ideas as to how the Drama Group could be re-activated, or from anyone wishing to be elected an officer of the Group.

Rendering the Group inactive is, we believe, a better choice than dissolution. The Group will remain an integral part of the International Club.

Our Rules require an Annual General Meeting and periodic elections of officers, which will of course be done. Until new elections are required, the existing members of the Committee will continue in office. Our next AGM will be held early in 1997, and we will send out notifications to members on our list.

We all regret that it has had to come to this, but we feel it is for the best.

Hans Kiaer, Group Leader, 836892

Rene de Knight, Deputy Group Leader, 839110

Peter Parkinson, Treasurer, 835394

Vicki Ellas, Secretary

### TELEPHONE CONTACT GROUP

This Group is a support group for all those who live alone and would like to receive or make morning calls. These are NOT hour-long chats but just a quick check-up call to ensure that all is well with the world! Further information from Lilia Grassie, 838349.

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## ACTIVITIES GROUP

All those planning to go on the Avignon trip will have heard that this has been postponed, through lack of support. This rare postponement has come about because it seems that a large number of our 'regulars' are away in September, and also the high cost of living in France makes the trip very expensive for a small group. We plan to try again in the early spring next year.

Details of this and other trips will be sent to all members - indeed, you may even have received them by the time you get this magazine. You will also just be getting over the Club picnic - we hope to have a report on this summer event in our December issue.

We are looking forward next month to our trip to Figueres, Girona and Besalu on 11th to 13th October. This will be a three-day, two night trip to northern Spain and will include a visit to the Salvador Dali Museum, an evening at the Peralada Castle, a tour of the cathedral in Girona, as well as the Art Museum and Romanesque Cloisters.

November will see a dinner with speaker. This will be on 26th November at El Crancs restaurant in the Placa de les Arcades in Andorra la Vella, and the speaker will be **Dan Parsons**. Dan worked in Egypt some years ago, and he will be talking about his experiences there. And, of course, our annual shopping trip - this time to Toulouse - in December.

Lastly, another reminder: if anyone would like to organise sporting activities - white water rafting, bungee jumping, hiking or fishing trips and so on, the Board would be very happy to hear from them. This would be quite separate from the "touring" and "dining" activities on offer at present.

Further information is available from Ann Price on 836653.

## THE COMBINED ACTIVITIES/HELPLINE DINNER

A report about the dinner organised jointly by the Activities and Helpline Groups at the Micolau Restaurant in Arinsal last July is given on page 8, while a summary of the talk given by Dinah Baxter is given on page 19.

## HELPLINE

Lillas Grassie is now getting very serious about the International Club Recipe Book. "It's no longer a joke," she told me, "We must receive all the recipes this month (September) so that we can organise them, design and typeset the book in time for publication for the Christmas Fair."

She feels that all of us with our wide international experience must have a number of favourite recipes from all over the world. "Why not share them?" she says. "It's all in a good cause."

She went on to stress, however, that recipes don't all have to be from distant lands. She would be delighted to receive some nice homely ones. After all, wherever we come from is a distant and exotic land for other people.

The thing is to share your favourite recipe - it can be a starter or a snack, a main course, a pudding or dessert, cocktail nibbles or your version of a famous recipe. If you have a convenient recipe, using tins or packets, then please let us have these ideas, too - provided you can get the tins or packets here in Andorra. All recipes will be acknowledged in the book - or they can appear anonymously if you so wish. So please drop a line to Lillas Grassie, Ed. Anyos Residencial, Apt. P.B.1, Anyos.

If you need any further information, please give Lillas Grassie a call (838349) as soon as you can - and Don't Forget, all proceeds from the sale of the book will go towards Helpline funds.



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Fax: 836674**



Helpline has continued to offer assistance, back-up and advice to many people throughout the summer months. We are always looking for people willing to help out occasionally or regularly. Any expenses will be reimbursed for assistance, such as supplying meals on wheels or taking a patient to hospital in Toulouse or Barcelona. Last year we organised an ambulance to take an elderly couple to Barcelona airport for repatriation.

And please don't forget - in the event of an accident or illness, Helpline has wheelchairs, Zimmer frames, crutches, walking sticks, bedpans, etc. available for loan in times of need.

Remember, we are here to help you in case of need. For further information call Dinah Baxter, 836980; Liliass Grassie, 838349; or Lyn Ayres, 843231.

## COMPUTER ADVICE GROUP

The Computer Club of the International Club of Andorra now has a list of some thirty members who are using computers. We hope to form a group of people with computer interests and skills who can refer to each other so that problems might be solved between them.

Stan Jones has a list of members who have some experience in certain aspects of the computer world - desk top publishing, word processing, scanning, Internet, etc. If you have any particular knowledge, please let Stan know. Exchange of information is important, so if you have up-to-date magazines or manuals, again let Stan know. And when you next go abroad, please look for a directory of web sites, manuals or other information about the Internet, for the information of our members.

If you are interested in joining the computer club, or have any information of computer interest, please call Stanley Jones, 836972.

## THE COFFEE MORNINGS

Between forty and fifty members (and not usually the same ones!) turn up each week to attend the Coffee Morning. The Club meets over coffee every Wednesday morning, 10.30-12.30, at the Paris-Londres Hotel. The hotel offers pleasant surroundings, ample parking, and a constant supply of coffee and drinks.

### Octavia's HOUSEHOLD HINT

To clean any plastic surface, including the interiors of fridges etc, use *bicarbonato costa*, available in a white container and marked *Uso Domestico*. Sprinkle on a damp cloth, wipe lightly, then clean off with a clean damp cloth.

At least two members of the CIA Committee are on hand to offer advice and guidance on what the CIA can do for you. There is a notice board of information, offers of assistance, requests for help, and news of Club and Group activities. Bookings for the activities may be made at the Coffee Mornings, and the Weekly Newsletter is on sale (a bargain at 25 pts each). English-language magazines are often on hand for anyone to take. It's a pleasant morning, and it's ABSOLUTELY FREE! So why not come along and meet other Club members and find out what's happening in the valleys?

 **viatges relax**



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## TENNIS GROUP

The recently-formed tennis group now has some eighteen members. For the moment, this is still run on a "contact" basis - that is, we put interested people in touch with each other - but if more people joined, we could arrange tournaments and/or round-robin competitions.

So if you would like to join us on the tennis courts, please call Ivan Stansby, 836210.

## WINE TASTING GROUP

A Summer Tasting was planned for late August in the Centre Esportiu d'Anyos.

The Group is in need of volunteers to assist in arranging future tastings as well as possible group trips to vineyards in Spain and France.

Further information from Ivan or Diana Stansby on 836210 or George Stobart on 838084.

# LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor

This letter is addressed to British Expatriate Pensioners (BEP's) whose pensions are non-indexed merely because they live in Andorra.

Altogether, there are some 400,000 BEP's in 137 countries who are being cheated in this way. The largest number is in Canada, where the Canadian Alliance of British Pensioners (CABP) was the first to be formed many years ago to

lobby against this injustice. Due mainly to its efforts, Winston Churchill and other MPs have taken up the BEP's cause by speaking in debates in the U.K. House of Commons as well as working behind the scenes.

The campaign has been successful to

the point that the British Government has now totally given up any attempt to justify its mean-spirited and discriminatory position. While it continues to index the pensions of 310,000 BEP's living in thirty-seven countries, it refuses to extend indexation globally, simply repeating its inability to afford the additional cost.

The financial argument is wearing increasingly thin. The total U.K. pension bill is now £30 billion. The incremental cost of indexing all BEP's is estimated at only £230 million. Interestingly, social security fraud is estimated to cost the U.K. government ten times this amount.

The CABP's stated objective is to achieve benefit parity for all BEP's, regardless of their country of residence. I urge those resident in Andorra to support the CABP by joining the Alliance. The annual subscription, US\$20, plus any donation you care to make, will enable the CABP to continue its campaign. This consists of communicating with MPs, senior Government officials and the news media in Britain and elsewhere. The Alliance also keeps members informed of its activities through a quarterly newsletter.

Anyone who wishes to join can contact me at 867284 for a membership form. Peter Dunkley



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# Programme of the 14th INTERNATIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL The National Auditorium, Ordino

**Friday, 20th September at 9.30 pm**

'Casals a Paris'

Works by Widor, Ravel, Saint-Saëns, Poulenc, Fauré

**Sunday, 22nd September at 6 pm**

'Musica of Russia, The Tales'

Oquestra Simfònica del Valles

Works: Mozart, Prokofiev, Rimsky-Korsakov

**Saturday, 28th September at 9.30 pm**

'The Plenitude of Classicism'

and Cor de Cambra del Palau de la Musica Cataluna

Works: Haydn, Mozart

**Sunday, 29th September at 9.30 pm**

'The Nineteenth Century'

Orquestra Ciudad de Granada

Lluís Carat, Ignacio Yepes

Works: Rossini, de Falla, Tchaikovsky, Beethoven

**Tuesday, 8th October at 9.30 pm**

'Eighty Years with Lord Menuhin'

Orquestra Nacional de Cambra D'Andorra

Gerard Claret, Yehudi Menuhin

Works: Mozart, Dvorak

**Sunday, 22nd September at 12.30 pm**

Concerts by Young Artists in the Parish Church of Ordino: Gelosia D'Amanti, Antique Music Group perform Baroque works

**Sunday, 29th September at 12.30 am**

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Reports on Activities

## DINNER AT THE MICOLAU

*Betty Pilkington tells us about a lovely summer's evening in Arinsal, when the Club held a dinner to acknowledge the help during the devastating avalanche last winter.*

A very pleasant evening was spent on Wednesday, 3rd July, at the Hotel Micolau in Arinsal. The idea behind the get-together was to say thankyou to **Fiona Dean** and her husband **Marcos Hiquero**, **Carol Phillips-Jones** and **Jill Trehwella** for all the help they gave to the victims of the avalanches last February.

Driving up the Arinsal Valley on that lovely summer evening, one is really struck by the beauty of this little country. The way nature evolves each year, how the beautiful wild flowers and the green trees beside the river come back every year after being covered in snow for five or six months, well, it really is a miracle.

Of course, the winter season has its beauty too, in a more dramatic way - and certainly never more dramatic than last winter when the snow fall was heavier than it had been for some fifty years.

What a terrible day it was when the avalanche struck, and thank goodness for people like **Fiona** and **Carol** who took in refugees, giving them free food and shelter for a few days. Many had lost everything. Finally, **Jill** put them in touch with **Dinah Baxter** who got the International Club members to rally round. After that, they were inundated with clothing and food donations. It was therefore very appropriate that **Dinah** was asked to speak at the Dinner.

To get back to the July evening. It started with drinks at the bar when we met up with our friends. We then sat down to an excellent meal. The only complaint was that it was too much. The tables were beautifully set out and drinks were plentiful. Olives and *Fuet Salami* were already on the table, soon followed by *Pa amb Tomaquet* in the Catalan style, and a large salad.

We then enjoyed Aubergine with Cheese or Canneloni, followed by Lamb Chops or Roast Chicken in a delicious sauce with baked potato, and beans and carrots, altogether too much for all but the most hearty eaters.

The choice of desserts was excellent: a really fresh fruit salad, or almond tart, which looked very good, or a generous helping of ice cream, followed by coffee, and chocolates or

sugared almonds. All the personnel were very friendly and the service was impeccable, quick and unobtrusive in spite of the large number of people they managed to fit it in.

**Brian Dore** very ably introduced **Dinah**, and the talk she gave on her experiences as a doctor in Jamaica had us all enthralled. What a different life it was out there, and she certainly had some tough assignments. One would need to be very special to cope with all the dangers in the poorer areas; being threatened at knife point and working in the men's Mental Hospital at Kingston. Her description of this reminded us of 'Silence of the Lambs' - walking down the barred passage with the inmates flocking to the bars - frightening. **Dinah** and **Jodie Foster** have something in common.

**Ann Price** thanked **Dinah** for the interesting talk and **Fiona** for a very pleasant dinner. Then we all made our way homeward after yet another International Club success organised by **Ann**. This community owes a great deal to people like **Ann** and **Dinah**. Thank you both.

- **Hotel Micolau** is named after one Micolau Baro, who built it many years ago as a village *Borda* in true Catalan style, with a big open fireplace - a very welcome sight on cold winter nights - especially if you're an avalanche refugee! They are open seven days a week, offering a three-course *Menu del Dia* for 1,000 pts, excluding wine. The hotel is on the right of the road about 250 metres beyond the Hotel Solana in the village of Arinsal.

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Reports on Activities

## VISIT TO THE NATIONAL PARK

*The Club day-trip to the National Park of Aiguestortes (twisting waters) proved a great success. Here, John Berthoud tells us about the spectacular waterfalls and early summer flowers.*

On Saturday morning 15th June, we were welcomed aboard our coach by multi-lingual Caroline Friis-Pedersen and were soon to start our one-day trip to the Spanish National Park of Aigues Tortes. Beyond Seu d'Urgel we took the recently re-built road to Sort, where we stopped for coffee and croissants.

The weather was warm and sunny and the atmosphere in the coach was relaxed and cheerful.

We then took the road to the Col de Bonaigue. Before coming to the village of Espot, Caroline gave us the programme for the day and a well-informed talk in several languages on the National Park.

Arriving at the very pleasant village of Espot, we stopped at the local Information Office where we were shown a most interesting film on the geological formation of that particular part of the Pyrenees and of the local flora and wild life.

Before leaving, we were given a useful leaflet in English on the history and the present condition of the Park. Whilst waiting for the Jeeps to take us up the valley to Lake Sant Maurici, we all had more coffee and drinks.

The distance between the village and the lake is approximately ten kilometres. The road was built for hydroelectric work before the area became a National Park: it is not only narrow but in very bad condition. The Jeeps are driven by local men on both sides of the track and at tremendous speed. The writer found the experience rather frightening. However, we all arrived safely at the lake.

On our way we passed several areas of devastation caused by recent avalanches similar to those which occurred in Arinsal. Fortunately the shores of Lake Sant Maurici were spared this devastation and we had our picnic in magnificent mountain scenery. Several peaks around the lake reach almost 3,000 metres.

After lunch several of us started on a walk around the lake which had been rightly recommended by Caroline. The walk is indeed beautiful, sometimes being on the shore of the lake, sometimes well above it. We couldn't have arrived at a better time for wild flowers. We

thought the small blue spring gentians, which were in abundance, particularly attractive. The walk takes about an hour or more depending on how fast you walk.

The waters of the lake were perfectly still and of various shades of blue. We also saw a spectacular waterfall which was probably at its best as there was still a great amount of melting snow further up on the peaks. It would be interesting to know how deep the waters of the lake were before the days of hydroelectricity.

At four o'clock, we all met again at the picnic site where the Jeeps were waiting to take us on our return journey to Espot where everyone bought their postcards and souvenirs. We naturally had more refreshments at this village with its welcoming cafes.

The coach collected us very soon and as we drove through Llavorsi we saw several rafts, manned by six people, descending the river *Noguera Pallaras* at tremendous speed. A final rest stop was made at Sort before making our way back to Andorra where we arrived at 7 pm.

A great many thanks are due to those who organised this delightful trip, particularly to Caroline.

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*Reports on Activities*

## THE CAR BOOT SALE

*A bright, cold morning at the end of June saw another Car Boot Sale in Arinsal. Here, Caroline Friis-Pedersen gives us an indication of the amount of work involved in its organisation. and the very effective public relations*

A pleasant and profitable morning enjoyed by everyone involved, even though they were turning blue with cold. Many stallholders, wrapped up in blankets, defied the threatening snow clouds

There were twenty-five stalls, eighteen individuals and seven charities. Money collected from bookings for pitches was donated to Mossen Juan (La Massana priest) for his charity CARI-TAS PARROQUIAL. He was delighted and is looking forward to the next C.B. Sale. In fact several people asked me why we didn't hold them every month!

Advance publicity was very good this year: two long radio interviews with self, and a week of daily mentions in "What's On" programmes, and full press coverage. All the locals were most receptive to our sticking notices all over their

garden gates and fences, lamp-posts and shop windows.

Andorra TV did us proud too on the day, with many vendors and their wares featuring on the 9 pm news that night. I was also asked to talk about this and other CIA activities as well as the thirty-plus nationalities of our members.

Some very appreciative letters and phone calls of thanks were received, particularly from charities participating for the first time. They all want to join us again next year

Items sold included computers, furniture, ornaments, toys, clothes, boots, cakes, jams, preserves, and all the usual odds and ends. It was gratifying to see people coming loaded with things for sale - and even more satisfactory to see so many contented folk leaving with bags full of goodies.



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Reports on Activities

## FLAMENCO IN BARCELONA

*The Irish are known for their 'joie de vivre', and Ralph MacLachlan says that they didn't let us down during the Club weekend trip to Barcelona last May!*

On Saturday, 4th May, a reasonably large group, shepherded by **Ann Price** and **Josefina Martinez**, set off for Barcelona. Our driver was, as usual **Rafael**, who provided some initial excitement by manoeuvring the bus over the narrow bridge to Anyos during the pickup. The journey was otherwise uneventful and we reached our four-star hotel shortly after noon.

### La Sagrada Familia

There was a variety of restaurants, snack-bars, etc. in a nearby shopping complex for a discretionary lunch. This was followed by an organised visit to the Gaudi cathedral - the Temple of La Sagrada Familia. This is a most impressive structure, but there were no punters prepared to wager on a completion date. For the uninitiated, construction started in 1882! The cathedral has a lift and stops to some magnificent vantage points. One or two of the more energetic used the steps, but were a little subdued on return.

The final event of the afternoon was a visit to Gaudi's residence - which was unfortunately closed. A stroll around the gardens (despite the onset of rain) was a rewarding experience. One member of the party got lost in the adjoining municipal gardens - with many requests for assistance in fractured in Spanish as the rain intensified - *donde esta el aparcamiento de l'autobus*. In the final analysis, however, the offender was only five minutes late, and all was forgiven.

On return to the hotel, most of the travellers

opted for a rest before re-assembling for a visit to the fishing port for dinner. The weather was unfavourable, but **Rafael** was able to deposit his charges close to several fish restaurants. We were all fairly hungry by this time and there were no recorded complaints on food, price or service.

There was an unusually large Irish contingent present and some Celtic exuberance was in evidence during dinner - at least in one restaurant. On return to the hotel, a small group concluded the evening by partaking of some additional refreshment at the hotel bar.

On Sunday, after an excellent buffet breakfast (in the hotel), one group visited the Maritime Museum, Las Ramblas and the Museum of the City whilst the other went to the Aquarium and Gothic Centre.

The Maritime Museum displayed an excellent model of the royal galley of Don Juan of Austria and afforded an opportunity of reflecting on the harsh conditions of the galley slaves. The Gothic Centre and Museum of the City were also impressive, the latter displaying fascinating remains of the Roman city - Barcino.

### A Flamenco Dance

For many, the highlight of the weekend was the Sunday evening visit to the Montjuic area followed by a meal and flamenco in the Poble Espanol. Your correspondent does not remember the latter stages of the evening too clearly, but recalls that the Irish contingent gave vent to some rebel songs on the return journey to the hotel. The necessary singing talent was not, however, evident and the description 'discordant' was applied by some!

Monday morning provided an opportunity for a visit to the Aquarium for those who missed the earlier visit. The remainder went shopping in Marks and Spencer - or other stores in the shopping complex. A few just had some beers. The afternoon return journey to Andorra was completely uneventfully.

Heartfelt thanks are due to **Ann** and **Fina** for their guidance, and to **Rafael**, whose patience was matched only by his competence.

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Reports on Activities

## THE PLEASURE TRIP TO CASTELLAR DE N'HUG

*Usually, it seems that it's only the International Singers that have something to sing about, but here we have a report from Bob Muir on a trip that saw him in full-throated rhapsody!*

"Oh, what a beautiful morning!  
Oh, what a beautiful day!"

After a lot of murky weather, the ninth of July dawned, and glory be, "the sun was a-shining to welcome the day".

The route planned and previously explored by our remarkable Ann Price was:

Seu d'Urgell along the exceptionally scenic Vall du Segre; coffee break at Martinet; on to Bellver de Cerdanya; shortly after, taking the right fork to Das, Alp and on to the attractive ski resort of La Molina. Then onwards and ever-upwards along a lovely winding country road to a height of one thousand nine hundred metres (6,233 feet!), descending thereafter to the quaint mountain village of Castellar de N'Hug, recognised by UNESCO as of architectural and historical importance.

En route we spotted sizeable flocks of sheep, and an exciting flurry of large birds of prey, possibly black kites or buzzards, some twenty-odd, circling a peak above us. Possibly a dead lamb?

Some of us poked around the village shops, and others ventured down the deep rustic stone steps lined with rough wooden branches for rails, marking the pathways alongside sparkling waterfalls descending precipitously to the 'font'. I gave up counting after the first fifty deep steps, and

pressed on with some determination, but drinking in the scenery and enjoying the bird-song amidst the sound of rushing waters. The font itself left a lasting impressison of a sheer volume of pristine water cascading steeply over the greening rocks - a faery picture.

The walk from the font to the Font Hotel was something over a kilometre, and it was a pleasant relief from the heat to come upon this veritable oasis, with its gardens, kiddies' playground (where Samir and I disported ourselves, she "chuting" down into my welcoming arms!)

The inviting restaurant provided a superb repast. Expertly prepared, variety of choice, accompanied by champagne, red and white wines, and impeccable service.

What better could one wish for?

The route home wandered enjoyably to La Pobla de Lillet along the Llobregat river to Guardiola de Bergueda, then the Tunel del Cadi, Seu d'Urgell and home. Two amazing incongruities on the way were an old cement works with its ruined houses - obviously a thriving community of yesteryear, and a museum of aged rolling stock - 'puffer' locomotives and the like; buses and other vehicles bordering on the antique.

Rafael, the driver, earned special mention. His English was excellent; he drove safely giving one a feeling of complete confidence.

As for Ann Price, well, after this excursion, I would follow her to the ends of the Earth!!

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

Our recent household hints from **Annegrete Nissen** have provoked considerable interest. In this issue we have a hint from 'Octavia', while **Clare Allcard** has asked if anyone has any hints as to how to remove stains from pale-coloured leather furniture. If you have any ideas, please drop a line to **Clare Allcard**, Xalet Hort Dret, L'Aldosa, La Massana.

\*\*\*\*\*

Did you know that one of our Members has built himself an aeroplane? **David Baines** has been working on the project for some years, and this summer, he finally had a test run - down his own road. He had to take off the wings because there wasn't room for them! We hope to have a full report in our next issue.

\*\*\*\*\*

We've just heard of a fascinating character who lives in Nepal. **Tom Hughes** is an ex-Ghurka officer who chose to stay on in Nepal when he completed his service.

Although he is on his own, he has adopted and cares for over forty destitute boys, one quarter of them handicapped.

When **Clare Allcard** told us about him, she mentioned that as a hobby (she didn't say how he finds the time for hobbies!) he collects razor blade wrappers, used telephone cards, and the little paper sachets the more exotic tea bags come in. Clare asks if we could save any of the above items. Why not give her a call, or drop them in at the Coffee mornings - a large envelope is hanging on the notice board to receive these items! Clare says thanks!

\*\*\*\*\*

Please don't forget to send your favourite recipe to **Lilias Grassie**. Lilias is hoping to publish a C.I.A. cookery book of popular recipes with contributions from C.I.A. members - so please send your recipes to her. If you have an anecdote - about its history or when and where you first came across the dish, please include it. Drop Lilias a line at Ed. Anyos Residencial, Apt. P.B.1, Anyos.

\*\*\*\*\*

And did you hear that when **Pavarotti** went shopping for a shirt in Andorra, he found that the largest size fitted him a bit too snugly.

"Where can I go from here?" he asked the salesgirl. "Why not try the Gym at Anyos Sports Club?" she said.



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RESTAURANT REVIEW

## 'CAL CRISTOBAL'

*Continuing with our restaurant reviews, Tony Hooper shares his latest 'find' in La Massana*

Some of our members in La Masana have in the past enjoyed a set lunch menu at the 'Pont' Bar/Restaurant in the centre of the town. Now the proprietor, Christophe, has opened a new restaurant next door to the 'Centre de Salut' (opposite Estile Nordic). Sheila and I can heartily recommend the 'Cal Cristobal'. One can choose from a very wide choice of menu. One of the specialities of the house is a variety of rice dishes.

The restaurant has an extremely pleasant ambience and all visitors will receive a warm welcome from Christophe. One of the problems is making a choice and knowing that the portions will be generous.

We started with a very palatable soup, and we chose Leg of Lamb. A whole roasted leg

### RESTAURANT



### CAL CRISTOBAL

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(from what I would estimate was a rather tall beast!) was placed on a side table to be carved as required. There was sufficient to feed a party of six.

We had, of course, started with the usual *pan tomate* and various meats, so by the time we had consumed more than our share of the leg (and taken enough to feed the dog for days!), we found we couldn't face a dessert. I can, however, recommend them as I have managed to leave room for some on previous occasions. We had a bottle of wine - the house wine is a very acceptable

Rioja. We finished with large coffees and liquers, and the final bill was about 3,000 pts.

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## SO YOU DON'T WANT TO LEAVE

# ANDORRA!

*Following a recent article by Tony Gee about leaving Andorra, Tony Hooper has some helpful advice to give those of us who want to stay here - for ever!*

In a recent issue Tony Gee wrote a very interesting article concerning the measures to be taken if one decided to leave Andorra. This produced a response from a member who wished to know the procedures if one never wanted to leave the country, that is, to stay in the Principality for the rest of one's life. I'm sure a number of our members may have wondered the same thing.

Well, you might like to know that the English-speaking church has compiled a very full set of information in case of death, which fully covers the administrative matters to be considered, and how to proceed in making funeral arrangements. This document runs to some six pages, and because of its length - and perhaps content - we decided not to print it in *Intercomm*. However, the Church have very kindly made it available to us. So, in future, copies will be held by all

members of the Board, and will be available to all Club members.

There are, however, a number of things which are very important to all of us. Firstly, make sure that your will is up to date and made in Andorra - this last point is vital. Make sure that someone knows where it is, and that they have your permission to act on it. If you can register with a Consul, either here in Andorra, or if not available here, then in Barcelona, then do so. They will automatically take details of your next-of-kin. If you live alone, it is particularly important that you keep someone informed so that they can act on your behalf. We have seen recent examples where following the death of a resident, there was no record of next-of-kin, no knowledge of a will, and no access to funds to meet the costs incurred. Whilst you are still enjoying life in Andorra, put your house in order.



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## THE SMALL FLOWERED WILLOW-HERB

*D. Lian* has written to tell us of a plant that grows wild in the valleys of Andorra which can be used to ease a number of medical problems.

Many who suffer from disorders of the prostate gland, bladder or kidneys can find relief without an operation through the small flowered Willow-herb (*Epilobium spp.*) If an operation has been performed, Willow-herb can relieve the problems which can occur afterwards. But a doctor should always be consulted before any such treatment is taken.

One man wrote that the small flowered Willow-herb had give him relief. "I was in hospital following a heart attack but I also suffered from prostate disorder," he wrote. Because of his heart he could not have an operation, so he started to drink three cups of willow-herb tea daily; within a few days, he had no more complaints. He continued to drink two cups each day to ensure a complete recovery. Another person wrote that his sister-in-law suffered from a tear in the intestine and bladder caused by X-Ray treatment. It was so painful the doctor gave her morphine, but after drinking the tea for a week, the pain subsided.

The small flowered Willow-herb was mentioned in pharmacopoeias up until about 1880. Synthetic drugs pushed it aside, but it has recently been recognised again for its medicinal properties. The Willow-herb grows in many gardens between strawberries, vegetables and flowers. For many



years it was pulled out as a troublesome weed.

In Andorra it grows in the mountains on hillsides or near rivers and streams. There are several species of Willow-herb. Those with medicinal properties can be recognised by their small flowers. The colour is reddish, pale-pink to almost white. The flowers stand on top of the long thin pod-like seed vessels. These later split, disclosing many silky white hairs in which are embedded the tiny seeds.

The whole herb is gathered, that is, stems with leaves and flowers, but care should be taken to pick the herb in the middle of the stem - it breaks easily - so that it can form new side shoots. The plant is cut in the fresh state. Even in the most severe cases, only two cups of Willow-herb tea are needed, one cup in the morning on an empty stomach and one cup in the evening. But, again, a doctor should be consulted before embarking on the treatment.

### Directions

*Infuse 1 heaped tspn fresh leaves (or 1 level tspn dried leaves) in 1/4 litre boiling water for 5-10 minutes.*

Condensed from Maria Trehen's *Health through God's Pharmacy* Ernsthaller by D. Lian, M.H., A.A.D.P. (a Master Herbalist and member of American Association of Drugless Practitioners)



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## OUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBOURS

*When Jo Mills was asked what she does all the time in Andorra, she had an intriguing and gratifying tale to tell.*

When asked "What do you do all the time in Andorra" it is difficult to know where to start, especially if living at the end of a road six kilometres up a mountain. Perhaps it is a good idea to think of something to do with our many friendly neighbours - yes, we have lots of neighbours even though we are far from anybody.

One day, hearing a faint squeaking and scuffling from the air extraction unit above the cooker, I thought a dormouse might have fallen down the pipe leading to the roof space (it's a slightly odd system). I'd seen one running up the wall in that direction several times when it was getting dark. Several screwdrivers later, dismantling the unit showed no sign of success and the thought of a long dark crawl over the itchy, dusty lagging above was not appealing. However, there was still squeaking, and I didn't have to go down the valley for another four hours.

First snag, there is a little door under the eaves at the far end of the roof. Unfortunately, it was overgrown by a vine complete with bunches of grapes just then and my ladder couldn't cope, so an extendable ladder had to be borrowed.

Second snag, the only bit of rope to survive being lent to pull a homemade snowplough wasn't long enough. It had to be supplemented by an ancient bit of sash cord. Armed with these and a splendid torch, invaluable during power cuts, there was the question of suitable clothing.

From previous experience of roof lagging, I donned my husband's pre-war boiler-suit tucked into rubber boots, a bath cap and an old cotton face mask - once I'd found them. Eventually, suitably clothed and armed, the pipe was reached.

Third snag, when the lagging was laid, the pipe must have needed an extension and a bit had been added on, but at an angle. The rope refused to go past this, but my arm was just long enough to manipulate the sash cord past the joint. The rope went down as far as that as well.

After a long wait, punctuated by apparently advancing squeaks, two tiny dormice appeared. They didn't want to leave the safety of the rope for some time and weren't at all put out by my rather strange-looking appearance.

However, they eventually moved onto the lagging and appeared to be functioning slowly but normally. Their tails seemed to stand up, rather like a squirrel's, when they moved on to the flat. Assuming this to be the end of the exercise, I pulled up the bit of rope and then the sash cord.

And what should be there on the end of the rope but a tiny and apparently dead dormouse, its claws firmly dug into the cord? I carefully extacted them. Then, laying him on the lagging, I stroked him gently. This has often worked with birds who fly into windows and knock themselves out. He appeared to come round. Then I heard more squeaking from the pipe. Having let the cord down again, plus the rope, I went back to my patient. He had started to move about but didn't seem to want to go anywhere. I thought I'd fetch some water and perhaps some bread. When I came back with some water and cheese (all the bread was in the freezer at the time) he was actually wandering around, but there were still some squeaks from the pipe. It must have been at least a six foot vertical climb for them on the cord and the others had taken a long time. I really had to leave them to it.

Several hours later, when I crawled back, there were no squeaks or signs of any of them. The water had all gone and most of the cheese. I pulled up the climbing aids and stuffed the end of the pipe with lagging until there was time to put some mesh over it.

The whole escapade with my friendly neighbours had taken the best part of a day.



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## HIGH ROAD OF THE PYRENEES

*The route from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean, along the top of the Pyrenees is one of the world's most spectacular walks. Margaret Shaida talked to George Little about his recent walk with Don MacInnes from Andorra to the Mediterranean*

As the weather got warmer, the idea of paddling in the sea became more and more appealing. Perhaps it was this cooling thought that inspired George Little and Don MacInnes to visit the Mediterranean last July. But they didn't go down to the sea by car or bus. Nope, they walked - from Andorra to the sea - and ten days after leaving home, they hope they would be able to dip their weary feet into the soft, blue Mediterranean waters.

It was on first July that George and Don set off for the Mediterranean - just a few days before Don's sixty-seventh birthday! There are a number of hiking trails across the Pyrenees, several of them criss-crossing through Andorra. The leading ones include the GR11 which goes along the Spanish side, the GR10 which goes along the French side, and the HRP (*Haute Route Pyrenees*), which bounces along the top of the mountain range from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea.

George and Don picked up the GR10 in the Madriu Valley off the Engolasters Road. They chose the 'French' route because it is well signposted and has good refuges. There are also some excellent up-to-date maps (*Carte de Randonnees*) on a scale of 1:50,000. George stressed the importance of an up-to-date map: "It can throw you right off," he said, "when a farmer fences off a field or puts a barrier across the trail."

They stopped the third night in Err where there is a hostel run by a German lady. Despite the fact that they usually stayed at refuges each night, they went fully equipped with the latest in sleeping bags ("self-inflating and really comfortable"), a gas unit, 'bivvies' (tiny tents), eating irons and a supply of food which included nuts and raisins, dried milk, soups, chocolate bars, porridge and honeyed oatcakes.

After four days, they reached Mt. Canigou, staying the first night on this side of it, and the next night on the other side of it - with six hours of high hiking between the two stops.

The next day and night (their sixth) were spent indulging themselves at a good hotel. It was Don's sixty-seventh birthday - reason enough

to catch up on the laundry, to immerse themselves in a hot bath, and to have a fine dinner with wine and service. They had to walk down to the hotel, located in Aries-sur-Tech, an old French mining town, and then walk back up to the track again. Luxury doesn't come easy on such walks.

Not a day went past without their meeting somebody. They were also walkers - of all nationalities, but mostly French. "July and August are the busiest months," George told me. "At other times, you can go for days without seeing anybody."

They had to scramble across snow drifts, and pick their way around quite a bit of devastation caused by avalanches. It seems that Arinsal was not alone this last winter in being savagely attacked by crushing snow slides.

They also encountered a viciously cold wind from the north. At one stage, it whipped around them, nearly blowing them off the mountain side. "If it hadn't been for our rucksacks giving us some ballast," chuckled George, "we would've been blown off the top!"

On the way, they also passed through Le Perthus, one of the many tiny duty free enclaves which exist all along the Pyrenees. These tiny "states" are little more than villages consisting of a cluster of duty-free shops.

All along the route, the views had been magnificent. When they got up on the eighth morning, they could see the Mediterranean, right across to Perpignan and as far as the Bay of Roses. But they still had another two days to descend towards their destination, Banyuls-sur-Mer.

On the last day, the weather turned wet and murky. The mist swirled around in the densely wooded area and they couldn't find the trail markers. In looking for them, George and Don got separated, despite constantly calling out to each other. It was one pm, and they had arranged to meet at Banyuls railway station at half past four. Although George had the compass, they both landed up at the station on time. Experience was clearly on their side. But they never did get to dabble their weary feet in the Mediterranean.

## JAMAICAN DAYS

*The Speaker at the Club Dinner in Arinsal last June was Dinah Baxter. For the benefit of those unable to attend the dinner, we give some brief excerpts from her talk*

For those of us who sometimes find ourselves on the patient's side of the desk in the doctor's surgery, it is always interesting to hear the views from the other side of the desk. Dinah Baxter has worked in many parts of the world in her capacity as a general practitioner, and her talk at the Club's dinner at the Micolau Restaurant last June, gave us a fascinating glimpse at her many and varied experiences.

Early on in her career, she called in a consultant to diagnose a small girl with a rash - which she thought might be something very serious. It was her first experience of flea bites and poverty - and she felt very foolish!

At the other end of the spectrum were the actors from a nearby film studio - who were suffering from bites from a monkey, a donkey and a parrot - all received in the line of duty.

But it was when Dinah went to Jamaica in 1955 that she first came across the rough and ready side of medical care. She had to tackle "everything and anything that came our way".

"After a year at the University Hospital, I went to work in Government hospitals, which was horrendous. We were always short of something, or the equipment was falling to pieces, and often there was no oxygen in the delivery rooms at the Maternity Hospital - but we improvised and the patients survived.

"After seven or eight months, I gave up this job as I was very pregnant, but I was still the emergency anaesthetist at the TB hospital where my husband worked. I was called out one night for an emergency operation which ended in the small hours of the morning. A few hours later, my first daughter was born." Dinah said that her daughter is herself now a doctor, and she often consults her when needing advice for Helpline.

"Three children and three years later, I went to work in the Mental Hospital in Kingston. It was grossly overcrowded with three thousand inmates where there should have been only a thousand. Many of the people had been there fifty or sixty years....

"I took over a chronic male ward where there were three or four hundred men in the one compound. The entrance was through a barred

passage with several security doors. When they saw me coming, they flocked to the bars, to peer at me and to try and touch me. This was rather scary. (I understood then what it must be like for a gorilla or chimpanzee in a cage, being stared at by humans.) Later I discovered that I was the only woman most of them had seen in ten or fifteen years. I was also the only doctor they had seen since being admitted to the hospital.

Dinah also learnt later that the previous doctor never received the patients. He would sit in his office while the attendant told him about the men's symptoms... He would write out a prescription, which was not difficult, as the pharmacy carried only about six medicines..."

After a couple of years, Dinah set up her own practice. Waiting for her patients one day, a man asked to see her cleaning lady, who had already left. Then suspecting something, she picked up her bag and went into the waiting room - to find the man waiting there with a knife. Dinah brandished her bag and screamed for help. The neighbours rushed in, and the man fled.

Sometimes, Dinah resorted to the traditional methods as practised by her mother-in-law; at other times she made night calls to remote and poor areas in the bush, where sometimes she had to pick her way barefoot through the dark. She was once met by a hostile crowd, but was fortunately rescued by one of her patients.

Dinah concluded that "living in developing countries can sometimes be difficult and frequently hazardous, but it is rarely dull and is often hilarious".



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# HIGH ROAD OF THE PYRENEES

*The route from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean, along the top of the Pyrenees is one of the world's most spectacular walks. Margaret Shaida talked to George Little about his recent walk with Don MacInnes from Andorra to the Mediterranean*

As the weather got warmer, the idea of paddling in the sea became more and more appealing. Perhaps it was this cooling thought that inspired George Little and Don MacInnes to visit the Mediterranean last July. But they didn't go down to the sea by car or bus. Nope, they walked - from Andorra to the sea - and ten days after leaving home, they hope they would be able to dip their weary feet into the soft, blue Mediterranean waters.

It was on first July that George and Don set off for the Mediterranean - just a few days before Don's sixty-seventh birthday! There are a number of hiking trails across the Pyrenees, several of them criss-crossing through Andorra. The leading ones include the GR11 which goes along the Spanish side, the GR10 which goes along the French side, and the HRP (*Haute Route Pyrenees*), which bounces along the top of the mountain range from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea.

George and Don picked up the GR10 in the Madriu Valley off the Engolasters Road. They chose the 'French' route because it is well signposted and has good refuges. There are also some excellent up-to-date maps (*Carte de Randonnees*) on a scale of 1:50,000. George stressed the importance of an up-to-date map: "It can throw you right off," he said, "when a farmer fences off a field or puts a barrier across the trail."

They stopped the third night in Err where there is a hostel run by a German lady. Despite the fact that they usually stayed at refuges each night, they went fully equipped with the latest in sleeping bags ("self-inflating and really comfortable"), a gas unit, 'bivvies' (tiny tents), eating irons and a supply of food which included nuts and raisins, dried milk, soups, chocolate bars, porridge and honeyed oatcakes.

After four days, they reached Mt. Canigou, staying the first night on this side of it, and the next night on the other side of it - with six hours of high hiking between the two stops.

The next day and night (their sixth) were spent indulging themselves at a good hotel. It was Don's sixty-seventh birthday - reason enough

to catch up on the laundry, to immerse themselves in a hot bath, and to have a fine dinner with wine and service. They had to walk down to the hotel, located in Aries-sur-Tech, an old French mining town, and then walk back up to the track again. Luxury doesn't come easy on such walks.

Not a day went past without their meeting somebody. They were also walkers - of all nationalities, but mostly French. "July and August are the busiest months," George told me. "At other times, you can go for days without seeing anybody."


They had to scramble across snow drifts, and pick their way around quite a bit of devastation caused by avalanches. It seems that Arinsal was not alone this last winter in being savagely attacked by crushing snow slides.

They also encountered a viciously cold wind from the north. At one stage, it whipped around them, nearly blowing them off the mountain side. "If it hadn't been for our rucksacks giving us some ballast," chuckled George, "we would've been blown off the top!"

On the way, they also passed through Le Perthus, one of the many tiny duty free enclaves which exist all along the Pyrenees. These tiny "states" are little more than villages consisting of a cluster of duty-free shops.

All along the route, the views had been magnificent. When they got up on the eighth morning, they could see the Mediterranean, right across to Perpignan and as far as the Bay of Roses. But they still had another two days to descend towards their destination, Banyuls-sur-Mer.

On the last day, the weather turned wet and murky. The mist swirled around in the densely wooded area and they couldn't find the trail markers. In looking for them, George and Don got separated, despite constantly calling out to each other. It was one pm, and they had arranged to meet at Banyuls railway station at half past four. Although George had the compass, they both landed up at the station on time. Experience was clearly on their side. But they never did get to dabble their weary feet in the Mediterranean.



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