

INTER COMM

CLUB INTERNACIONAL D'ANDORRA

MAGAZINE / REVISTA



VOL. 6 - Núm. 4 - SUMMER / ESTIU 1997

CLUB INTERNACIONAL D'ANDORRA

INFORMATION / INFORMATIU

THE BOARD OF THE CLUB

| | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| PRESIDENT: | SU DOWNHAM | 83 54 72 |
| SECRETARY: | JOSEFINA MARTÍNEZ | 82 39 55 |
| TREASURER: | BRIAN DORE | 83 59 31 |
| CHAIRMAN EXEC. COMM.: | TONY HOOPER | 83 61 54 |
| SEC. EXEC. COMM.: | PETER PARKINSON | 83 53 94 |
| SOCIAL ACTIVITIES: | ANN PRICE | 83 66 53 |
| HELPLINE: | DINAH BAXTER | 83 69 80 |
| HELPLINE: | LILIAS GRASSIE | 83 83 49 |
| COFFEE MORNING: | SOLVEIG FEILBERG | 83 71 18 |
| PUBLICITY: | CAROLINE COLVIN-SMITH | 83 73 15 |

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

COVER PICTURE: CLUB "SUMMER" PICNIC 1996 BY SVEN OSTERGAARD



*Estate Agents
and
Developers*

- *We are the specialists based in Arinsal*
- *We have all types of properties available*
- *We can sell your existing property or find a home to suit your needs*
- *We can arrange lettings. We always have special offers*
- *We REALLY want to help you - Come and see us*

*Josep M^{re} Camp Areny
Director Comercial*

Casa Jan - Tel.: 837 721 - Fax: 837 827 - ARINSAL - La Massana (Principat d'Andorra)

INTERCOMM

Club Internacional d'Andorra

Quarterly Magazine

June 1997

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| News from the Board <i>Tony Hooper</i> | 1 |
| Editorial <i>Margaret Shaida</i> | 2 |
| Letters to the Editor | 3 |
| News from the Groups | 4 |
| Art Group | 4 |
| Dance Group | 4 |
| International Singers | 5 |
| Scottish Dancing | 5 |
| Computer Group | 6 |
| Second Hand Books | 6 |
| Car Boot Sale | 6 |
| Scrap Book | 6 |
| Activities Group | 6 |
| Naturalist Group | 7 |
| Here and There | 8 |
| Into the Rain Forest | 11 |
| Catalan Films <i>Caroline Colvin</i> | 16 |
| Restaurant Review <i>Margaret Shaida</i> | 17 |
| Misdirected Mail <i>Hassan Shaida</i> | 18 |
| The Handicraft Show | 19 |
| Year of the Ox <i>Pam Churcher</i> | 20 |
| Commercial Enterprises <i>Fran Doxey</i> | 21 |
| Montserrat <i>Sarah & Mike Burgess</i> | 22 |

Published by Club Internacional d'Andorra
Typeset by Margaret Shaida
Artwork by Hassan Shaida
Printed by Impremta Envalira S.L.,
Carrer Bonavista, Edifici Sol-i-Neu (Baixos)

NEWS FROM THE BOARD

Tony Hooper

The organising committee of the "Hobby Exhibition" were overwhelmed by the response on several counts. Firstly, although we always believed that amongst our members we would find a treasury of talent, the breadth and standard of the work that was submitted was almost beyond belief. There had certainly been some superb talents hiding away, and it was a joy to be involved in bringing their work to the attention of many. We were graced by some excellent coverage from the local media, including a three minute slot on T.V. shown, I believe, three times. This certainly aroused interest in the local population with over three hundred visitors on the Sunday, over half of whom were locals.

I would like to express my thanks to all those involved, the organisers, the helpers, the exhibitors, the "cooks" who provided titbits throughout two days via the Helpline stall, and, of course, to all those members who supported us by attending. We can now look forward to the next one (in 1997) As a footnote, I would like to record a remark heard during the weekend: "After seeing this display, I shall look at people in a different light when we meet in future."

I have to report some sad news. Ann Price and Josefina Martinez who, as you all know, have been responsible for organising a super Social



ESTIL NORDIC MOBLES

A COMPLETE RANGE OF HOME, OFFICE AND GARDEN
FURNITURE

INCLUDING CARPETS, RUGS, LIGHTING AND KITCHENS

ENGLISH GREETINGS CARDS, AND A WIDE SELECTION OF HOMEWARE AND
GIFTS

APARTHOTEL ROSSELL, AVDA SANT ANTONI, LA MASSANA

Tel: 838 301 Fax: 838 302

Activities programme for the past eighteen months, have decided that, for personal reasons, they will be taking a sabbatical next year (1998). It is very apparent that this will leave a large gap that may be very difficult to fill. Now is the time for all those people who have enjoyed our activities to come forward and offer to help. We are not seeking a replacement for our stalwarts, a difficult task, but do seek members who would be prepared to organise one activity next year. Some offers have already been received but more are needed. The Committee hope to be in a position to publish a programme for 1998 by the end of this year, but this will only happen if you, the members, come forward with positive ideas in the next few months.

There have been some problems recently regarding membership of Groups within the Club. I personally have found it difficult to understand how anyone can wish to take regular advantage of activities which the Club offers and yet not wish to become a member. We have always been somewhat flexible on this question, allowing non-members to join activities and, where essential, Groups, by the payment of a surcharge on the non-member. Those of us who pay what is a very modest membership fee should not be expected to subsidise those who do not wish to join, and who, in some cases, actively oppose the Club and what it stands for. □

EDITORIAL

by Margaret Shaida

I am always amazed at the discomfort some people are prepared to suffer in order to see birds and animals in the wild. I, too, should love to see rare birds and animals, but my desire for a comfortable life takes precedence. So I read with real interest and admiration the

absorbing account (page 11) of the Naturalist Group's visit to Ecuador last autumn. Nearer to home, the Club's visit to three commercial enterprises in Andorra was a huge success, as reported by **Fran Doxey** (page 21). We also have a report (page 20) from **Pam Churcher** on what has now become an "annual" visit to the Chinese restaurant in Seu d'Urgell. A record-breaking number of sixty-nine members attended this popular evening. And it's obvious from **Mike and Sarah Burgess's** report (page 22) that a lovely day was had by all those who went to Montserrat. I'm sorry I wasn't here to participate in the Catalan Film Festival last February, as reported (page 16) by **Caroline Colvin-Smith**. And do you remember the "well-travelled letter" received by one of our members (in the last issue)? Well, a philatelist member, **Hassan Shaida**, has taken a look at the whole question of misdirected mail over the past century and a half (see page 18). As a result of this mass of fine features and reports, our own report on the Hobbies Fair has been somewhat curtailed. But since most of you visited the two-day Fair, you will have seen for yourselves the magnificent display that members put on. Some exquisite examples of painting, knitting, macrame, Persian carpet making, tapestry work, glass engraving and model making were on display, while the skills of batik, cake decoration and many other activities were demonstrated. The whole atmosphere was lively and entertaining, and showed everyone what we all "get up to" during those long winter nights!

Lastly, may I ask members to let me know if they've been to a good (or even a very bad!) restaurant recently. I've run out of reviews - but I can't believe we've run out of restaurants! □

DAMONT

MOBILIARI

A complete new interior in the style of your choice.
Come and see our selection of furniture and gifts
Special ideas for special people

C/ VERGE DEL PILAR, 6 - ANDORRA LA VELLA - PRINCIPAT D'ANDORRA
TEL.: 864 664 - FAX: 821 872

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WHEN SHOULD WE CELEBRATE?

In "A Look to the Future" (*Intercomm*, March 1997) it is suggested that some people have already made restaurant bookings to celebrate the start of the Third Millennium on 1st January 2000. From one point of view, they are too soon, from another, too late, in my opinion. There's a good controversial statement! Let me go on to explain and justify it.

On a date in July of this year, I shall celebrate my seventy-second birthday. What does that mean? It means that I shall have lived on earth so far for seventy-two complete years. Until July 1998, I shall say: "I'm seventy-two" meaning seventy-two complete years plus part of a year. The actual date will be July 15th, the fifteenth day of the seventh month. Again, what does that mean? Does it mean seven complete months and fifteen complete days? No, it doesn't!

As we all know, a month has not completely passed until it lasts a day, a day has not passed until its last minute. Although we hardly ever think of it, this is a different method of reckoning from that of birthdays.

The same goes for years. We are in the year 1997, but that does not mean that we have completed 1997 years and are now in the 1998th. Only at midnight on 31st December 1997/1st January 1998 shall we have completed 1997 years. Extend that three years further, and it is clear that the year 2000, the last of the Second Millennium, does not end until 31st December 2000. The Third Millennium starts on 1st January 2001. Celebrate, if you wish, on 1st January 2000, but you'll be a year too early...

...And you'll be several years too late. Ask yourself, just what are we supposed to be celebrating? The 2000th anniversary of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, founder of the Christian religion. No one knows the true date of birth. The 25th December is the "official date". But the current prevailing opinion among historians of the period is that He was born in 5 or 6 BC.

Well, then, you should have celebrated the beginning already, on 31st December/1st January 1994/5 or 1995/6, as you choose.

Amid all this confusion, a consequence of our inconsistent methods of calculating time and of a system of registration of births two thousand odd years ago, I see only one satisfactory solution: To hold *three* celebrations: on New Year's Eve 2000, New Year's Eve 2001, and at a time of your own choosing, celebrate the 2005th or 2006th anniversary of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth.

Peter Parkinson

This letter raises a number of interesting questions! I recall that in Iran, on a child's first birthday, one would always say that he/she was "entering his second year". The first birthday in Iran is actually called the second birthday - the first birthday having been celebrated on the first day of birth.

However, I suspect that despite all these careful calculations, there will be no stopping the celebrations taking place at the turn of the calendar from the 1900s to the 2000s. As somebody told me once, it's the change of date on your cheque book that makes all the difference!

The Editor

A SLOW LEARNER'S TALE!

One evening in the foyer of the National Auditorium a gentleman greeted me in Catalan. In spite of the gentleman's courtesy and patience with my attempts to converse, using my limited vocabulary, it was not long before I realised that I should learn more Catalan.

Next morning, full of enthusiasm, I spent some time in the language laboratory of La Massana and by lunch time I had learnt that, in Catalan, "jo soc" means "I am".

The next day, I telephoned a shop in Andorra la Vella and when a male voice answered I said: "Jo soc John Hunt: Senyor Josep, si us plau". The person at the other end said, "I don't speak English." And put down the phone.

This was a not very encouraging experience. It seems that I need a Catalan accent, as well as a larger vocabulary.

John Hunt

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

THE ART GROUP

The Group has continued to meet on Tuesdays, 1 pm to 4 pm, in its studio in Andorra la Vella. The size of the Group has varied as most members often travel to their home countries or elsewhere to return, often months later, to the incomplete painting that was left behind. Work is now often of a high standard and several members have had the satisfaction of selling their efforts. The most visible effort of the Group this quarter was when visitors to the Hobby Exhibition saw members working on their recent paintings. Many visitors expressed surprise at the professional calibre of the work. At the exhibition, a demonstration of contemporary/ creative Batik making was also given by Art Group Leader Nina O'Brien.

Finding the correct dyes and wax in Andorra was not easy but, in spite of so many limitations, the requisite modifications to the traditional method proved to be of great interest. A message of this demonstration was that creative art is not only expressed in painting or drawing. The word "Batik" originated from the Indonesian word "Ambatik" meaning drawing and writing, and became established as an ancient craft. It is a "resist" process in which areas of cloth are covered with hot, melted wax to prevent them being coloured by dyes. The traditional craft has now become more of a creative art expression enjoyed by many. Members of the Group participate in most Andorran collective exhibitions and, after an early exhibition in Escaldes, they put up their first big show, organised by Nina O'Brien in Ordino, in June 1996. A turnout of hundreds of appreciative visitors, very well received and

reported by local press and radio, made the effort worthwhile. We will be back with another show when we have enough to show the varied talents of the members. The 1996 exhibition consisted of almost three years work of the Group. Meeting once a week, travelling, hosting families and visiting friends, plus seasonal breaks does not leave much time to follow in the footsteps of Picasso. In addition to our more artistic efforts, we have field trips, try different restaurants, host parties and share out many diverse cooking experiments. We are never short of creative thinking and creative food! Intending members should note that there is no charge for tuition and guidance. They need to be receptive and need more patience than obvious talent - the latter follows the former. Members supply their own materials and there is a small charge of 1,000 pesetas per month towards the rent (also subsidised by the Club) of the studio. For further information, phone Nina O'Brien tel: 837772. N.O.

THE DANCE GROUP

As members probably know, the planned third annual *Una Nit* (A Night of Music and Dance) sadly had to be postponed this spring. You will have heard of Maite Castro Binstead's bad ski accident earlier this year, and, though she is, thankfully, well on the way to a full recovery, it was unthinkable to put on the show without her. A pity, because this year's show promised to be an inspired one. However, to keep the continuity of an evening of entertainment which has evolved into an annual event, we hope to present the show at the end of this year. We'll keep you posted. J.R.



Tel: (+376) 867022
Fax: (+376) 867033

Britt Nielsen

Agència Nielsen S.A.

Immobilària - Real Estate - Ejendomshandler
Sales & Rentals throughout ANDORRA

THE INTERNATIONAL SINGERS

At 4pm on 11th April 1997, we were joined by Barry Wilson, Mike Stone, Desmond Allen and Hans Kier, and accompanied most generously by Isobel Bowen, so that we could sing together Wallace's favourite version of the 23rd Psalm.

A man with a glorious voice, Wallace Baxter brought great enthusiasm to our pre-Christmas rehearsals and will be missed by us all.

As a group, we have continued to meet and to practice but are in sore need of Binnie Segal who is caring for Joe in Mallorca after his hip replacement.

Rather than inflict horribly un-musical sounds on you, we have decided to postpone our spring concerts to a later date.

As always, we enthusiastically welcome new members to our women's choir.

We've recently made two excellent recruits, but we should always welcome some men members. So, men, please start thinking about joining in time for Christmas! C.A.

SCOTTISH DANCING

We've been a small but dedicated group this winter, greatly enjoying new dances brought to us by Michael and Judith Scott. We are now closing down for the summer, but plan to start again in October. So hope to see you then.

Over the season, we raised approximately sixteen thousand pts for Mossen Juan and the hall. C.A.

A TRIBUTE

Dr Wallace Baxter, who died at his Ordino home on Monday, 7th April, was a Scotsman who had graduated from the medical faculty of Glasgow University and practised as an anaesthetist in Scotland and in Richmond, Virginia.

He and his wife retired to Andorra in 1987 where he became a well-known and much-loved member of the Ordino community.

We, the Board and the members of the C.I.A., would like to express our deep sorrow at his death and our great appreciation of the enormous amount of work he put in behind the scenes to support the Club activities.

This gentle and cultured doctor will be remembered particularly for his extraordinary humanity, his great sense of humour and the loyalty to his friends.

He is survived by his widow, a brother, two sisters, a daughter a grand-daughter and four stepchildren to whom he was devoted.

We shall all miss him very much and we send our heartfelt condolences to his family.

(The above is a translation of the Board's tribute to Wallace which appeared in 'Diari d'Andorra' on 11th April)

COMPUTER GROUP

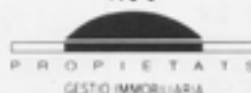
The first of the two May meetings of the Computer Group was attended by just nine members in its new and temporary setting.

The talk concerned viruses and the action to take to protect oneself against these man-made

"diseases". We learned that we could pick up a virus from two sources: one was via the Internet (specially when downloading information), and the second was from computer programs (especially from cheap, pirated games).

There was a general and wide-ranging

ROC



Marketing a full range of interesting properties and offering a professional service coupled with friendly advice. We can be found in the centre of La Massana adjacent to the Hotel Rossell.

Roc Propietats, C/General, La Massana, Principat d'Andorra. Tel: 835346 or 838169.
Fax: 836674

discussion about the power of computers, the proliferation of programs, and the need to take precautions against electricity cuts. It is hoped from now on that the bi-monthly meetings will be held in the Rutllan Hotel in La Masana at 11am. Further details are available from Stan Jones on 836972 or on E MAIL: sjoyjones@mypic.ad. M.S.

The English-Speaking Church of St. George, La Massana

There will be an English-language church service on 21st June, at 11 a.m.

From September, there will be weekly services at 11 am during the months of September, October and November.

There is a social meeting after each service.

THE C.I.A. SCRAP BOOK

Our 1996 Scrap-Book is so full that we've had to start a fresh one for 1997. Many thanks to members who have contributed photos taken at some of our social and cultural events.

I'd be grateful for many of these for the 1997 book - or even the loan of negatives. Please give Caroline Colvin-Smith a call. C.C.

CIA SECONDHAND PAPERBACKS

During 1966, the sale of second-hand paperbacks raised 15,000 pts for charity. The money was divided equally between Helpline, ADN and APAPMA.

The paperbacks are looked after by Stella Madden in Sispony, and they are available for 100 pts each. If you would like to buy (or contribute books), please ring Stella on 837681 to arrange an appointment.

Each year, all the books are packed and taken to the Book Section of the "Church Fayre" for sale. Afterwards, the remaining books are returned to Stella's house for sale throughout the year.

Secondhand paperbacks - in good condition - are always welcome. Please call Stella Madden. S.M.

CAR BOOT SALE

Don't forget the Car Boot Sale to be held on 6th July 1997. This is always a splendid social event as well as a fine opportunity to get rid of all those unwanted items cluttering up your home - and to acquire a whole lot more new items to take their place!

It is a congenial (and very beautiful) setting where you can help raise money for yourself, as well as for a number of charities in Andorra. As always, this will be held in the car park in Arinsal, and will be organised by Caroline Colvin-Smith.

It's still not too late to book a pitch for yourself, or if you would like to contribute towards one of the Charity stands, then please give Caroline a call on 837315 for further information. M.S.

ACTIVITIES GROUP

As you know, the April tour of the Botanical Gardens of the Costa Brava on 4th-6th April was cancelled, as was the May trip to Tarragona and the Torres vineyards. Not enough people registered to make either of the trips viable. We apologise to those who had booked.

June 1997 - Avignon and the South of France

The next activity has been confirmed and will go ahead - a five-day trip to Avignon and the South of France on 25th to 29th June. The price is 49,500 pts for members (57,000 for non-members) and 15,000 pts for single supplement, which will include the return bus journey to Avignon, bus tours on the three intermediate days, four nights bed and buffet breakfast in a three-star hotel, guided tours of the perfume factory and winery plus an information pack including brochures and maps.

BADI
CATIFES ORIENTALS



Full range of silk and pure wool Persian carpets for sale

Competitive prices

Washing, repairs and advice on the care and hanging of carpets

English spoken

C/ Prat de la Creu, 3

Tel: 860107 Fax: 865404

July Activity

We had to cancel our proposed trip to Santiago in July, because of insufficient interest. To be viable, a definite number of bookings was necessary because the accommodation along the route becomes booked-up months ahead. I have, however, arranged with the 'Alternative Travel Group' based in Oxford (tel: +44 1865

513333) for CIA members to join one of their tours. The itinerary and price are available directly from the company and, when phoning, ask for Ione Broadbent. Alternatively, call Ann Price for further information.

August and September

There will be a guided tour of Seu d'Urgell in August. Lunch will be at the Avenida Hotel and will comprise a paella in the Majorcan tradition, complete with sangria. The excursion will be restricted to a maximum of 25 persons.

The September Craft Tour of the Segre Valley will be made by mini-bus, because of the difficulty of access to the various business enterprises. We expect to visit cheese factories, potteries, and wood craftsmen. The cost of the trip, including lunch, will be about 4,000 pts. Book NOW.

Egypt, from Cairo to Aswan - October 1997

Details of this trip were sent out to all members in April. This is your last opportunity to visit Egypt with Ann and the CIA.

Dinner with Speaker - November 1997

Margaret Shaida has kindly agreed to talk about her life in Iran. The cost of the dinner will be between 3,000 pts and 4,000 pts.

Christmas Shopping - December 1997

It has been decided to arrange a return to Barcelona for a Christmas shopping expedition this year. By far the greater majority of those who responded to my call expressed a

Recently, we have been asked again about information regarding what happens in Andorra following the death of a resident. I would refer to the short article in the Autumn 1996 issue of this magazine. However, we would like to emphasise two points therein: REGISTER with your Consul (Citizens of Great Britain and Commonwealth countries who have a High Commissioner can register with the British Consul, Angel Guerra, in Andorra la Vella. Citizens of other countries may have to register in Barcelona. MAKE A WILL in Andorra and ensure that someone has access to it in case of your death. INFORMATION regarding FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS, LEGAL REQUIREMENTS, etc is available from members of the Board and the English-speaking Church.

preference for Barcelona. Please call Ann Price 836653 if you would like to go on this trip in the first half of December.

Gourmet Dinner

This is a proposed extra event. If you are interested, please contact Ann Price.

FOR 1998

The Czech Republic and Prague

Full details were sent to all members in April. The trip from Andorra will be bus and will take about ten days. For further information, call Ann Price on 836653.

THE NATURALIST GROUP

In August, the Naturalist Group are going to Gibraltar. All C.I.A. members are invited to come along. You do NOT have to be a 'birdwatcher' to take part. For more information, telephone Brian Dore on 835931.



LES TRES CREUS LABORATORY

Clinical Analyses

Blood tests: 8 am to 12 noon

Home service when required

We speak English

Man Spricht deutsch

Tel: 820212 Fax: 865592

FOR SALE

CONVERTED FARMHOUSE

(Haute Pyrennees, 4 hrs from Andorra)

Living/Dining Room with solid fuel stove, Kitchen with dining area, Pantry/Wine Store/Laundry, Games Room with ping-pong table; Bedrooms: one large double and two doubles; Modern Bathroom and separate WC; Lobby leading to attic of apx. 90 sq.m. Tiled floors with timber in master bedroom; timber ceilings with exposed oak beams,

Gas-fired central heating and hot water. Attached garage/workshop, Terrace and Swimming Pool; hedges and fruit trees screen the house. Grazing land apx. 7000 sq.m.

Price: F450,000 ono Contact: Halls, Andorra 836523 or Chapman, France 05 62660025

HERE AND THERE

A recently-published book with the title "Andorra" is not all that it seems. The book is a novel about an American, Alexander Fox, who once read a book set in Andorra. When he needs to escape his past in America, he flees to Andorra to start a new life.

According to a review in *The Times of London* (23 February), he doesn't make much of a go of it, finding himself "caught up in other people's tragedies". What *The Times* review does not mention is that our hero gets caught up in some trouble down by the harbour and has to take refuge behind a palm tree!

On the very first page, he arrives in Andorra by train, describing it as "a small country and her city - for there is only one: the capital, La Pleta - is proportionately small. The train station (!) at which I found myself was not the chaotic grand example one expects in European cities, but simply several glass-roofed platforms separated by as many tracks, a whitewashed waiting room with worn wicker furniture and a ceiling fan that rotated at a speed that succeeded only in proving that it was operational..."

It's a pity that the author, Peter Cameron, didn't once read a book *about* Andorra before he gave this misleading title to his book - he might have written a more accurately-researched book.

So be warned, though entitled "Andorra", the book has very little to do with "our" Andorra.

"Andorra" by Peter Cameron, published in GB by Fourth Estate Ltd, 6 Salem Road, London W2 4BU, 1997

CARLOS
PERRUQUERIA

Av. Sant Antoni

Edif. Daniel Armengol, baixos

Tel: 83 65 77

LA MASSANA

Principat d'Andorra

For those of you planning to celebrate the Millennium on 31st December 1999, be careful where you park your car. If you park it in a multi-storey car park with an automatic barrier, you may find you've "overstayed" your welcome by a century. If the computer in the car park reverts to 1900, you may be liable to a bill for one hundred years plus the few hours of your stay. You could spend some time trapped in a car park, until some understanding human appears on the scene. And how many understanding humans do you think there will be about in the early hours of the new millennium?

"If only it had a runway, Andorra could easily be mistaken for an airport." So wrote Andrew Jack in a report recently in the *Financial Times*. He referred to the "transit passengers" who "flock to buy duty free goods in the Pyrenean mountain state's glamorous boutiques." Well, I can't imagine many pilots would be very happy to land on a runway set among these high Andorran peaks.

I was amused to hear that when some friends of Dinah Baxter (who also happened to be Friends of Kew Garden, London) were visiting Dinah recently, they took a few cuttings from her garden - to take back to Kew Gardens. No wonder Dinah's "Open Days" in the summer are always such a success. The fame of her garden goes from strength to strength!

CASA GUILLA

Rustic British-owned rural guest-house

situated in medieval hilltop village
of Santa Engracia

two hours from Andorra border

Good food with house party atmosphere.

Excellent base for birdwatching, walking, painting

Richard and Sandra Loder

CASA GUILLA

Santa Engracia, Apartado 83, 25620, Tremp, Spain

Tel/fax: 973 252080 Mobile tel: 909 368473

Do you want to know more about computers? Well, there will be various classes starting in September here in Andorra. One of the courses will be in Catalan and further details can be obtained from the Education Offices in Andorra la Vella (in the same building as The Library).

The French School in Andorra la Vella is also offering a free course in computers (from September to December). Which reminds me: a friend of mine attended this course last autumn, and after the first evening, she said she was even more confused. "The course is in French," she said, "but the tutor keeps referring to 'dos' in Spanish." She laughed when I explained that "dos" means "disk operating system" in English.

So don't be worried that your Catalan or French may not be good enough. Go with an open mind, and you may be surprised to learn how much French or Catalan you actually understand when it comes to talking about computers.

You will all have heard about David Baines' flight from Pal to Seu d'Urgell last April - in his own home-built aircraft. A group of friends gathered together in Pal to see him off, and cheered as he flew up into the blue sky. After circling, he flew off down into Spain, landing at the airfield in Seu. A splendid achievement! As far as we know, this is the first powered aircraft to ever take off from Andorra! Many congratulations, David!

I wished I had my own aircraft too, one day last April. I was due to fly to London on the very day that two of London's airports were closed (because of bomb scares). Barcelona airport was filled with stranded passengers - including some Spanish and Italian families (who had probably never heard of the Irish problem) hoping to fly from Barcelona to Rome - and waiting in vain for their aircraft to arrive from London.

Now that spring is here, and our thoughts turn to bedding plants and gardening, don't forget to make use of your CIA membership card - the garden centre in Santa Coloma will give you a discount on presentation of your card; as will Carlos, the hairdresser in La Massana. We also hear that Servissim may be able to make a good offer on car insurance if you are a CIA member!



for all your bus trips
in - and outside Andorra.
Special prices for clubs.

Juanito MARTINEZ

Tel. 823 653 - Fax. 862 936



CHENIL LA BEDOUCÉ, 11410 MEZERVILLE, FRANCE

- * Tranquil, English Boarding Kennels and Cattery, ten minutes off RN20 between Pamiers and Toulouse.
- * Excellent, individual kennels with shade in the summer and heating available in the winter.
- * Beautiful, newly-constructed Cattery!
- * Dogs exercised daily in three hectares of pasture and woodland
- * High standard of hygiene, security and nourishment
- * Great care and affection for all our guests

Telephone: (33) 68 60 37 10

SERVISSIM

PRIVATE VEHICLE INSURANCE

Our Private Clients save up to 25% on their premiums and obtain more comprehensive cover than ever before!

It is true to say that during the 10 years that we have been assisting our Private Clients, we have never, until now, managed to find a good enough deal on car insurance. The three most irritating things that upset clients and us alike have been:

- * The high cost and niggardly cover
- * The refusal by most companies to offer comprehensive cover on older cars
- * The difficulty in insuring cars with foreign plates

We have obtained for them the following benefits

- *Third Party cover - with added benefits
- *Driver invalidity and death benefit on all policies of 35.000.000 pessetes
- *Comprehensive - "All Risks" - cover, which means what it says
- *Comprehensive cover on all cars up to 5 years old, which can continue indefinitely thereafter.
- *Comprehensive cover on older cars considered
- *Cars with any registration plate considered
- *Travel assistance on all policies
- *Optional free hire car in case of accident
- *Lower excesses - *franquícies* - in most cases
- *Even lower rates for one driver and retired persons
- *And on cars with annual low mileage

**Give yourself a pleasant surprise
Ring us on 837836 for details**

INTO THE RAIN FOREST

Last autumn, three members of the Naturalists Group went on a tour of Ecuador. In the feature below, Ann Matschke, Jacque Crozier and Brian Dore get together to tell us of their adventurous experiences in a world far from our own.

Ecuador was once part of the Inca empire. The last of the great Incas, Huanya Capac, conquered Quito and its surrounds, unaware that Pope Alexander VI had already allocated this part of the New World to the Spaniards (1494). Five years after Huanya Capac's death Francisco Pizarro marched on to the scene at the head of a ridiculously small band of adventurers. He exploited the civil war situation between Huanya Capac's sons, gained control of a large part of the Inca empire and defended it against all comers, including the Spanish government. Given Pizarro's lack of administrative ability the intricate system of the Incas deteriorated rapidly. Francisco was assassinated in 1541 and his brother Gonzalo defeated by government forces in 1547. By the standards of the time the laws of the Council of the Indies were humane and fairly liberal, the Indios free subjects of the Spanish crown; in practice a feudal system reduced them to serfdom and the colonies were ruthlessly exploited. With the advent of the Bourbons in 1701 "enlightened" reform was introduced and Ecuador, with Panama, Columbia and Venezuela, became part of New Granada. Spanish authority finally collapsed during the so-called 1808-1812 war of liberation, which was the signal for the colonials to reach for independence. Mexico and the Argentine rebelled in 1810 and in 1811 Simon Bolivar began the fight against the Spanish administration. By 1826 his dream of a South American Spanish empire had come to nothing and the colonies split into regional states mostly run by military men. Today's president of Ecuador is the first to have been democratically elected.

We came in peace to modern Ecuador, a country not quite as large as Spain, with a population of eleven million; South America's second largest oil producer, the world's largest banana exporter. Situated on the Pacific coast, on the equator, Ecuador has it all. It is bisected vertically by the spine of the Andes, the rain forests of the Amazon to the east, the Pacific to



the west, and, six hundred miles beyond, the Galapagos Islands. It has brilliant butterflies, amazing plants, the strangest animals and no less than 1,478 species of birds. It is a naturalist's paradise.

The first impression on arriving in Quito is of a city in a developing country and of overwhelming traffic fumes. This small city of the inter-Andean region stands at 2,810m on a closed valley floor, climbing here and there to surrounding hills dominated by the volcano of Pinchincha. It has an air of 1935, though is in part very modern. Downtown is lively and colourful, the older Spanish-Indian quarter being restored under UNESCO grant: to find a plaza reminiscent of Trujillo evokes the notorious Pizarros. Quito was a between-forays base which we came to look upon as a haven, though it didn't seem so at the beginning. We were attacked by a knife gang in a public park and, though not seriously robbed, Brian was badly cut. This might happen in any city and in the longer term we are as likely to remember the concern of kind Ecuadorians and the excellent medical attention we received.

The Galapagos - las Encantadas - were our first port of call. We flew to the former US airforce base on Baltra Island and were taken

out to our boat, which berthed sixteen people. The boats are accompanied by national park guides, who impressed us with their enthusiasm, excellent English and knowledge of natural history. It was evident that everyone concerned with the tourist trade took pride in their renowned islands. Landings are restricted and the park is as carefully conserved as possible given the demands of today's tourism. The park entry fee is high at US\$80 per foreign visitor. The archipelago has some twelve major and twelve minor islands, four of them inhabited. They are volcanic in origin, some of them still forming, and are of lava with glaring white beaches. Viewed from a height they seem true desert islands with lagoons of turquoise, green and blue. To see them first hand in October was to find them arid and desolate.

Our dinghies took us ashore on Santa Cruz, Rabida, Bartolome and Genovesa. We met our first marine iguanas which, as you know, are six-inch lizards which rear up on rocks framed against the sky. The very largest we saw was one and a half feet and most could be measured in inches; so much for photographic record. The astonishment is to

find creatures which have no fear of man; it was we who trespassed. Male sea lions honked continuously as they guarded their harems, and the new-born pups bleated like lambs. Among the boobies and swallow-tailed gulls of the seabird colonies, enormous frigate bird chicks sat on improbable nests on the tops of bushes not very much larger than themselves. The Sally lightfoot crabs decorated the rocks like red flowers, the air was constantly alive with birds, and about our feet Darwin's famous finches fed unconcernedly. Enchanted these islands surely are.

For most of our subsequent trips we travelled by jeep with our guide and driver, Juan Carlos. We went to Mindo, set in the temperate forests of the Andean slopes north-west of Quito. We lurched over pot-holed tar onto an old, bypassed road of once-cobble-stoned mud. We were fairly appalled by the poverty we saw everywhere. Roughly seventy per cent of the population is poor and dwells in slums of wood and tin, in houses on stilts to better endure the flooding of the steep slopes. There are subsistence chickens, pigs, rib-wracked cattle; numerous, healthy-looking children, nine



Barclays Premier Banking International

The wide range of services available include:

- * A full banking service in all major currencies and internationally accepted credit cards.
- * A range of Barclays international funds and portfolio management services.
- * Fiduciary services, including trusts.
- * Financial planning in preparation for residence in another country.
- * Independent financial advice from our insurance services arm.

For further information contact:

John Gwilliam

Barclays Bank P.L.C.

2 rue Alphonse Karr

06000 Nice

Direct tel. 00 33 4 93 87 96 89

Fax no. 00 33 4 93 88 58 95

months apart. When the poor land becomes exhausted another small section of forest is cut on another impossible slope. Natural erosion is clearly quite serious enough without assistance. It was depressing.

The uniform green of the thickly forested slopes was broken here and there by the silver leaves of the Cecropia tree. We stopped for birds, but quite as frequently for fuchsias, bromeliads and tibouchinas. At Mindo, eleven hundred meters, we were housed in the compound of an hostel. We entered the forest proper to see the scarlet cock-of-the-rock at its lek site and this entailed the negotiation of slippery, muddy track. The plants are astonishing: they cling, hang, drip; montseras, philodendrons, anthuriums - house plants were never going to look the same. We saw toucans so perfectly yellow and black they seemed made of plastic; they couldn't be real and look that way.

We were to fly to Coca, en route for La Selva, the name of our lodge but meaning the jungle. The plane cancelled, we flew instead to a very forgettable place called Lago Agrio, from where we took a bus. It bogged negotiating road works and we spent an hour in appalling heat waiting for it to be towed out. At Coca our longboat awaited us, filled with our luggage, half a ton of supplies and various Indian families. The Napo, a tributary of the Amazon, is very wide, very muddy and filled with snags and logs. We grounded on a sand bank where

we spent another hour, and eventually arrived, fifty kilometres downstream, eleven hours after the day's journey had begun. To land we crawled through the one and a half foot gap between boat and roof, hauled ourselves onto a higher jetty, walked to a steeply sloped plank and, torches in hand, marched ten minutes along a raised bamboo walk to an inland lagoon called Garzacochoa. Here we stepped gingerly into smaller canoes which paddled us to the lodge, and stepped just as gingerly out of them. It felt like an Outward Bound course.

The low-lying forests have an annual rainfall of 2,000-4,000 millimetres, with 96-100% humidity. Temperatures of 22-25°C are alleged and we didn't believe it. On an overcast day the rain forest is bearable; when the sun shines it is stupefying. This is flood forest, underwater for part of the year, when fish swim among the tree roots. In the drier season it is extremely muddy and wellingtons may be hired. These were the sorest trial. On a hot day in a canoe we could feel our feet coming to the boil and at day's end our toes were white and wrinkled. But we wore the boots, tucked trousers into socks and applied sun cream. Things dropped from trees and the insects *dined* on repellent. We learned to touch nothing, no matter how great the need of a handhold; plants stung or had an amazing assortment of barbs and thorns. The rain forest wasn't impenetrable as we had imagined it would be, though it was all lianas, buttress roots and strangling vines;

VENDA SATELLITE AERIALS SALE
I LLOGUER T.V. - VIDEOS - Etc... AND RENT



Costes Teixidor - Bordes Roig, 7 - LA MASSANA - Tel.: 35 6 73

INVICO

Established in 1969

**ESTATE AGENTS &
COMPANY MANAGEMENT**

David & Judy Hill offer you a
personalised friendly service backed
by over 25 years experience.

Property rentals and maintenance.

**INVICO, S.L., Casa Nova Teixido,
Avda. Sant Antoni, La Massana.
Tel: +376 839241 Fax: +376 839243**

ranks of leaf-cutter ants marched purposefully along, each carrying a piece of leaf much larger than itself. Our guide was a locally-born Indian whose six hundred words of English were Western bird names. Jose could call the birds; small, skulking things came out to peer at us - Jose was magical. When we tired of stumbling through the jungle, he poled us across lagoons blue with lilies in search of water birds. As dining companion, on its own bunch of bananas, we had a charming, prehensile-tailed porcupine yet unclassified by science.

Who would have wished to have climbed back into that wretched longboat and spend four hours in driving rain reaching Coca? Or wait at its airstrip for a delayed plane? Or spend a terrific couple of hours watching downtown Coca in the rain? This is oil country and boom town Coca, properly known as Puerto Francisco de Orellana, reminded us of the escape scene from 'Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid'.

The slopes running west of Quito towards the Pacific are temperate to sub-tropical forest. Another back road took us past hovels and small fincas following the trans-

Andean pipeline from unlovely Coca to the Esmeraldas. We stopped short of the coast near Santo Domingo de los Colorados, at a lodge built by a Russian emigrant earlier in the century. Tinalandia is quite charming. All about it the once-closed forest has been seriously depleted, so that only a few areas still have pockets of natural growth. The value of conserving isolated, unlinked stands of forest is questionable, for they afford no habitat for larger species. At a former research centre, at two hundred metres, we found again the crops of Coca and its region; coffee and rubber trees; and had we gone lower still we should doubtless have found again the various palms, the coconut, the oil palm and the palmito.

We drove into the Andes, to a base at Lasso, a beautiful old hacienda-cum-hotel. Our route took us onto the Pan American highway, as pot-holed as any other road in Ecuador and a good deal busier. Next morning we proceeded to Cotopaxi, the world's highest active volcano. It was shrouded in rain and mist but now and again this lifted to give us clear views. The Andean scenery is dramatic, all volcanic, cone after cone after cone. Between them lie great

SERVISSIM

Edifici Areny, Baixos, Carretera General,
Arinsal, La Massana, Principat d'Andorra
Tel (+376) 837836 Fax (+376) 837179
e-mail: servissim@andorra.ad

Gestoria Privada
Serveis de Propietat
Lloguers i Apartaments de Vacances

Private Client Services
Property Services and Relocation
Rentals and Holiday Apartments

Andorra's only dedicated services company is proud to announce the opening of its new services centre in Arinsal, where clients new and old will find our full team of experts ready to assist them with any problems or difficulties that they may have. Ample free parking right outside the door.

Simon Binet - Private Consultations, Acquisitions and Relocation
Maria Teresa Castro - Quality Holiday Apartments and Chalets throughout Andorra
Carlos Coral - Long Term and Seasonal Rentals throughout Andorra
Barbara Biermann - Gestoria and Private Client Services
Gerald Binon - Finance and Accounting

OPEN: MONDAYS TO FRIDAYS 09.30 - 19.00 SATURDAYS: 09.30 - 13.00 15.00 - 19.00

plateaus of lava, mostly scrub-covered and becoming, as one ascends, paramo, high moor and snow field. While Carlos strove to find us the region's birds we were intrigued by the strange puya plant which denotes the paramo, and by Andean-Alpines entirely new to us. We elected to walk down - we might miss a plant! Four thousand five hundred metres was the highest any of us had been and it was a somewhat breathtaking exercise.

We turned to the eastern Andean slopes, heading for Baeza and driving through a central valley of large fincas much more prosperous than any we had seen. We climbed again into paramo and over the bleak, dramatic Papallacta Pass to drop to two thousand metres and to the privately run estate of San Isidro Labrador. Our charming hostess was a naturalist, and an inspired cook. Maria del Carmen showed us her collection of insects, trays and trays of carefully mounted and preserved specimens. At last we could appreciate the fifteen centimetre blue morph butterfly we had so often seen fluttering tantalisingly by. From the nearby Cordillera de Huacamayos we watched dawn break over the vast Amazon Basin, which spread below us from horizon to horizon, a great vista of forest upon which floated the occasional cloud.

Finally, we flew to Cuenca in southern Ecuador, a charming old city distinctly different from anything we had seen. Cuenca takes a pride in itself and seems to lack the slums we had become used to. We stayed mid-town at the Inca Real, a pleasant, Spanish-inspired hotel with galleried rooms set about central courtyards. We took a hire car into the Las Cajas national park, back into the Andes, all peaks and lesser peaks and small lakes on a wide plateau. The road was the very best we encountered, brand new tar running from Cuenca to the port and oil installations of Guayaquil.

The surrounding countryside is Indian settlement with neat

adobe houses and small-plot agriculture on grubbed-out paramo, a patchwork of fields which run up hill and down dale. The Indians are a pleasant people who smile a lot, the children bright-eyed, shy and polite. The women spun wool as they walked, gossiping along the paths, colourful in the regional dress of bright, embroidered skirt, shawl and felt hat. The nicest of wayside Madonnas was suitably protected from the cold in Indian shawl, blue scarf and hat. We had come, at the very end, to Ingapirca, once a provisioning base along the highway of the Incas. Its fine, hand-dressed stones had been rebuilt here and there to give some impression of how it had looked. "We wanted six days," an American lady said on the plane, "to see Ecuador and the indigenous." We took a little longer, ventured a little further and saw only a fragment. It seemed fitting to finish at Ingapirca, a mere way station of a once great civilisation. □

TANDOORI RESTAURANT



L'ESQUIROL CUINA HINDU

AUTHENTIC
INDIAN CUISINE

OPEN FRI • SAT • SUN • LUNCH • 12:30
OPEN FRI • SAT • EVENING • 7PM

SUN TERRACE

SOLDEU • 852 655

FESTIVAL OF CATALAN FILMS

Caroline Colvin-Smith and several other members of the Club enjoyed the rare opportunity of attending a Festival of Catalan Films

During January, February and March many of our members enjoyed The First Festival of Catalan Films in Andorra organised by the Andorran Centre de la Cultura Catalana and sponsored by the Govern.

In order to stimulate the foreign community here to take an interest in this facet of Catalan culture, each film was subtitled: two in English and others with French, Portuguese, German or Castilian. The subject matter varied from outrageous humour to philosophy, love, social comment and war.

Not only were the films extremely interesting and well-acted, but some were of a very high standard and we were lucky to be able to watch them in comfort at the Lauredia Cultural Centre's cosy little cinema.

Owing to the scarcity of Catalan films (banned during the forty-odd years of Franco's dictatorship) and the expense of dubbing, this was the first time any of them had been shown in Andorra. In fact, none was produced before 1976.

At present the Andorran public cinemas show only Spanish films or foreign films dubbed in Spanish so that the Centre de la Cultura's initiative was particularly welcome.

The CCC itself was delighted with the interest shown by the public and the CIA's attendance was much appreciated.

Each film was introduced by either the relevant director or the principal actor who, after the showing, would hold an informal question-and-answer session in which we were all invited to participate in whatever language we could.

These discussions were often very lively with plenty of hilarious anecdotes and provided a fascinating insight into the ups and downs of film production.

On film nights (every Wednesday) the Press and TV were very much in evidence and it was really satisfying to see some of our members not only featured on the news but speaking good Catalan!

Other members were invited to sit in at the special Press Conferences held several hours before each screening.

Owing to the very positive response to this festival, the Centre de la Cultura Catalana hope to put on another one next year. Furthermore, encouraged by its success, Pere Canturri, the Minister of Culture, has undertaken to try to have a Catalan film shown one day each week throughout the year.

This is presumably very much in line with the thinking behind the draft Política Lingüística Bill which is expected to become Law soon. This is to enforce the use of Catalan throughout Andorra, except when dealing with tourists! ☐

THE BRITISH CHIROPODY AND PODIATRY ASSOCIATION

is pleased to announce

DEBBIE CASTLE MSSCh MBChA
Qualified Chiroprapist

announces the opening
of her practice in
SOLDEU
from June 1997

For further information
Tel: 851042

 **viatges relax**



Mossen Tremosa No. 2, Andorra la Vella
Tel: 822044 Fax: 827055

Restaurant Review

EL MOLÍ DE LA PLACA

Last January, when Margaret Shaida visited El Molí de la Placa, she was impressed by the ambience of this pleasing little bistro in the mountain village of Arinsal.

El Molí de la Placa was bright, warm and welcoming on the snowy night we visited it back in January. A pleasing bustle of contented young skiers (of the nicest possible type - young, healthy and amiable - NOT boisterous, noisy or drunk), greeted us, along with the landlord, a pleasant young Englishman who clearly knows his way around his restaurant and bar.

Having settled ourselves down with a cool white wine, which quickly brought a healthy glow to our own chilled faces, we perused the menu.

As a devotee of pasta dishes, I was well satisfied with the wide selection. I chose *spaghetti carbonara* (as I always do, when I go to an Italian restaurant for the first time) and a side salad.


I was impressed: the steaming hot dish was served promptly after our order had been placed, and liberal sprinklings of parmesan cheese were offered. A fresh green salad with a delicate dressing was the perfect accompaniment. My only complaint was the sheer size of the dish. It was enough for two or three people - clearly a quantity designed for young people who've spent the day on the slopes in the open air. I, on the other hand, had spent the day in front of my computer. I had to reluctantly retire before I was even halfway through it - but that was entirely due to my

inadequate appetite, and nothing to do at all with the quality of the dish which was light, flavour-some and delicious. (It was so good, I even briefly considered taking up skiing, in order to increase my appetite.)

My companions chose a canelloni of spinach and ricotta, and baked tuna stuffed with mushrooms (both starters, but more than adequate as a main course), which they both pronounced to be quite delicious.

Also on the menu was a selection of about a dozen hand-made crispy pizzas - which looked large and inviting on our neighbours' table! Only four dishes on the menu went over 1,000 pts, three of which were the meat dishes - each of which was served with pasta, salad and a choice of cream and mushroom sauce, lemon sauce or fresh tomato sauce.

This is clearly a restaurant where you can eat extremely well for a minimal price. When we were there, they were suggesting a special Apres Ski offer of any one of their pizzas for 650 pts every day between 4 and 6 pm. Aimed at the ski-ing fraternity in the winter and the hiking and camping fraternity in the summer, El Molí de la Placa offers a wonderful, casual atmosphere (with traditional candles and checked table cloths). Yet, at the same time, it was clean, efficient and extraordinarily good value for money.

Highly recommended. 



**GARATGE
NOVAVISTA**

Ferran URTEU ROCA

c/- Bonavista, 15 - Tel. 829 933
ANDORRA LA VELLA

VIATGES

PANTOURS

YOUR TRAVEL AGENCY IN ANDORRA

Plaça Rebès, 11 - Tel. 820 400 - Fax: 861 401 - ANDORRA LA VELLA

MISDIRECTED MAIL

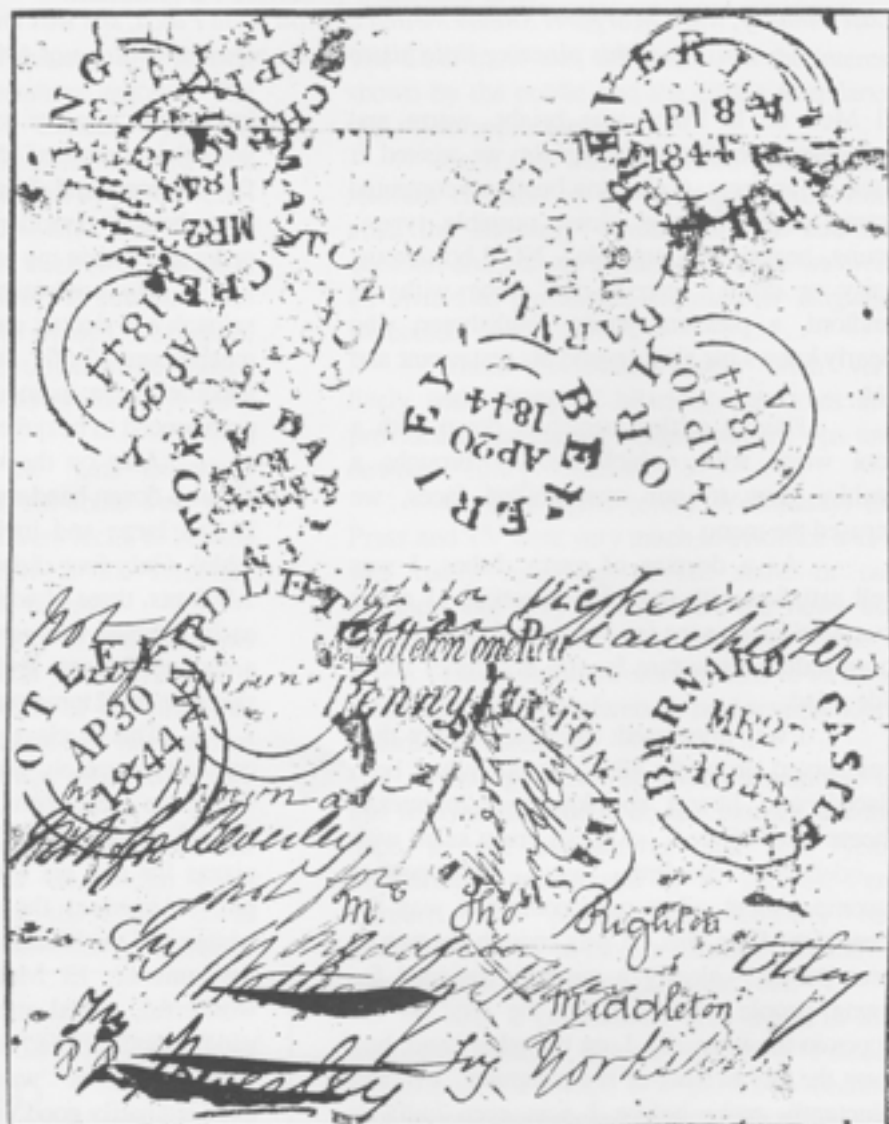
The reference in last month's issue to the letter that came from England to Andorra via Japan led Hassan Shaida to look at the whole question of misdirected mail

Octavia and Ronnie Jones should not be surprised to receive a letter from England via Japan (See Letters, *Intercomm*, March 1997). This, in a way, is the result of modernisation. There were fewer misdirected letters a hundred years ago than there are today.

Misdirected mail is a subject of serious study in philately, especially as part of "postal history" collecting, which is becoming more and more popular among stamp collectors. Mr and Mrs. Jones may get a few thousand pts for their envelope!

A hundred years ago, the post office had a large number of staff who constantly sorted letters. There were six deliveries of mail a day. I have a postcard sent by a husband in the morning to his wife saying that he would be late for dinner; with his wife answering the same afternoon saying that she would be out seeing her mother, but dinner would be in the oven! Obviously, in those days, they did not expect letters to go astray.

While the Victorian post office held the record for speed and diligence, they also recorded some life-long delays, though almost all by accident. The longest recorded time for a letter travelling within London, and without being misdirected, was fifty-one years, four months and sixteen days. It was a Valentine's card, sent on 14th February, 1868, which when being emptied from the post bag, must have



fallen behind the counter. After the end of the First World War, when the Stockwell post office was being renovated, they found the letter. Conscientious as ever, the postal clerk pencilled "Found behind old fittings in June 1919" and sent it on, applying another postmark dated 30th June 1919.

In fact, postal clerks and sorters went to extraordinary lengths to ensure that they delivered letters promptly and accurately. All letters posted until 8 pm (including Sundays and Christmas Day) were delivered the next morning anywhere in Great Britain. The post office had a special handstamp which read

"Posted after 8 o'clock" to explain why that particular letter was not delivered the next day.

Postal clerks also went out of their way to find an addressee. They delivered them when the address was hidden in a drawing (see right) or if the addressee had moved away, or even when a letter was addressed to an obscure town (see previous page). This was all done in dimly-lit post offices, or in cramped spaces aboard mail trains hurtling at over 120 km per hour through the night.

Today, however, there are more errors due to modernisation. Postal mechanisation and introduction of post codes means new sorting machines with computer programmes designed mainly to deal with such codes. The weak link is the code operator. A slight pressure of any finger, and the letter goes astray.



Then came the Thatcherite drive to flog off, sorry, "privatise" the post office, which meant withholding funds, closing down post offices, getting rid of "redundant" staff such as inspectors and pushing ahead with other similar "efficiency" measures. Now, once a slight mistake is made, there is simply no one to catch it, before it ends up in Japan - instead of Andorra. □

THE HANDICRAFT SHOW

The Arts and Crafts Display put on by the CIA last March in the Sala de Joventut in Ordino was a great success. Well over six hundred people visited the show during the two days it was open. *Diari d'Andorra* reported on it most favourably:

"One could see a great variety of hobbies on show, for instance, a stamp collection from countries all over the world, shells, or scale-models. Sewing, embroidery, macrame, carpets and rugs also had their allotted space and there were even demonstrations of how to carry out the different crafts 'to show the public how they are done', according to Caroline Colvin, a Club member. 'There are a great

many people who make wonderful things at home in their spare time and we thought it was worthwhile showing them at this exhibition,' she said." "This exhibition put on by the International Club (shows) the unceasing and intense activity of this group of people of many different nationalities, to become a part of Andorran society." □

WRITER/BIOGRAPHER

1. Would like to hear from individuals who consider their lives up until now have been interesting enough for people to buy the book! Women's biographies are particularly popular with publishers at present! (Not sure about Andorra's sexist laws here). If you have read any of Hugh (Telegraph) Massingberd's books of Obits. You will also undoubtedly feel the terrible loss when some lives are simply unrecorded. Write me a clear (preferably typed) brief synopsis for an opinion. I live just across the border (Ariege).
2. Writer, house-trained Englishman, just finished book needs quiet billet in Andorra for final edit before publishing. Guardianage perfect but will consider all reasonable propositions. B.J.F. @ BP 79 Pamiers, 09102 Cedex

THE YEAR OF THE OX

The Club's second trip to the Chinese Restaurant in Seu d'Urgell last February is reviewed here by Pam Churcher, who found she enjoyed the chance to practice wielding her chopsticks.

Such was the success of "Generalissimo Price" when she arranged a dinner at the Drac d'Or last year that the C.I.A. decided to repeat the event - to coincide with the Chinese New Year - "The Year of the Ox" - which was celebrated on 25th February last.

An incredibly good evening it was

too, and this time attended by sixty-seven members and guests which really speaks for itself.

As before, chopsticks were the order of the day and were in great demand, most of us taking the opportunity to improve our expertise.

We had plenty of scope so to do. Sixteen different delicious dishes were placed before us in fairly quick succession not to mention an unlimited flow of excellent Spanish wines.

All this was followed by a good choice of well chosen "Postres". No wonder conversation never faltered, and the evening seemed to pass all too quickly. Probably there was no extra space for the casual customer, but if there were, they would have wondered what it was all about.

WHY NOT ADVERTISE IN INTERCOMM?

Call Tony Hooper on 836154
for further details



Above, from left to right: Horst Matschke, Josefina Martinez, Pat Whish, Ann Matschke, Yolanda Guirao and Ann Price

Below, from left to right: Horst Matschke, Nouria, Maria Theresa Planes-Loren, Ramon Argiles and Maria



Without doubt, it was a great evening and when Jeanne Lodge rose to thank Ann for the meticulous background work she undertakes so conscientiously, we realized we are sometimes in danger of forgetting her work.

Believe it or not, the restaurant still had the very last word. Two Chinese liquors appeared as if by magic: *Kao Kang Chiew* and *Kueihua Chiew*, the one more fiery than the other but both meaning "Double Happiness". What a way to round off a really super evening. What a meal! Thank you, Ann! ☐

THE CIA VISIT TO COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISES OF ANDORRA

The following report was sent to us by Fran Doxey

On 18th March 1997, twenty members of the International Club were guests at three factories in Andorra. Our first visit was to the family firm of patisserie *L'Espiga d'Or*. We were welcomed by three generations of the Pons family, and a staff of about eight, all of whom had worked for the firm for many years. This small factory specialises in hand-made cakes and pastries. They demonstrated the making of *melindros* (small sponge fingers), *Crema Catalana* and *Encenalls de*

St. Josep, chocolate biscuits curled to represent wood shavings and given to fathers to celebrate father's day on St. Joseph's Day on 19th March. We enthusiastically watched all the processes, while in the corner a gentleman quietly performed wonders with chocolate, making works of art for Easter. All twenty of us, even those professing to be on a strict diet, then tucked into the most delicious croissants and chocolate - some even sneaked whipped cream into their chocolate. We staggered back to the coach and motored up to Arinsal to the water bottling plant. We were met by the director of the firm, who took us on a tour of the plant and who explained the intricacies of blow moulding plastic bottles, the filtering of the water and its

chemical composition. We wandered around the bottling plant watching the filling, labelling and cartoning of the bottles. We were interested to learn how stringently the quality of Arinsal water was monitored and left the plant clutching our souvenir bottles of water. Lunch was served in the Micolau restaurant and enjoyed by



(l to r) June Wong, John Hunt, Fran Doxey, Maxi & Rolf Kassebaum, Peter Wong and Trudy Ooman.

all, even though Caroline and Ann cracked their whips and we left the restaurant burning our lips on hot hurried coffee. At 3 p.m. we assembled in the foyer of S.T.A. (Service Telephone Andorra) divided into two groups and escorted through all the departments of the telephone exchange. I have to admit that it all seemed like magic to me, but some members were asking intelligent questions and gathering lots of valuable information. I would like to thank Anne Price, Caroline Colvin-Smith and Lillias Grassie for organising this interesting visit, and to Rafael who manoeuvred the coach through the narrow streets of Andorra. □



RESTAURANT
ELS PESSONS

Typical Mountain Cuisine
cooked over
open wood fires

Portuguese specialities
Try our wonderful *bocalla*!

Carretera General de Canillo Telefon: 85 20 05 Soldeu (Principat d'Andorra)

DIDN'T WE HAVE A LOVELY DAY THE DAY WE WENT TO MONTSERRAT!

*The CIA Day Trip to Montserrat this year was another memorable success.
Here, Sarah and Mike Burgess tell us all about it*

The day got under with an early start. Twenty expedees awaiting collection from all corners of the Principality by Rafael who proved to be our trusty driver. We had started our journey to the legendary Montserrat.

Anne Price briefed us with the day's itinerary and provided a summary sheet detailing the mountain's historic importance to the Catalonians together with the relevant sights and facilities available to the day tripper.

Our first stop was Restaurant *Cal Tomeu* for *café con leche* and for those who missed their breakfast croissants the size of land crabs. One of the main reasons for stopping here was the possibility that this establishment could qualify for entry into the "Clean Loo Guide" - if it ever gets printed. Twenty minutes later and we were back on the road.

During the next part of our journey some of us decided to catch up with lost sleep whilst the rest of us were able to enjoy an enthralling capture of the beautiful Catalan countryside which at this time of the year has an abundance of rosemary growing wild. Pale blue flowers enhanced by brilliant sunshine and a blue sky - what more could we have asked for? Occasionally, this being one, it is a pleasure to travel in an elevated position by coach, the full benefit of which are experienced on a trip such as this.

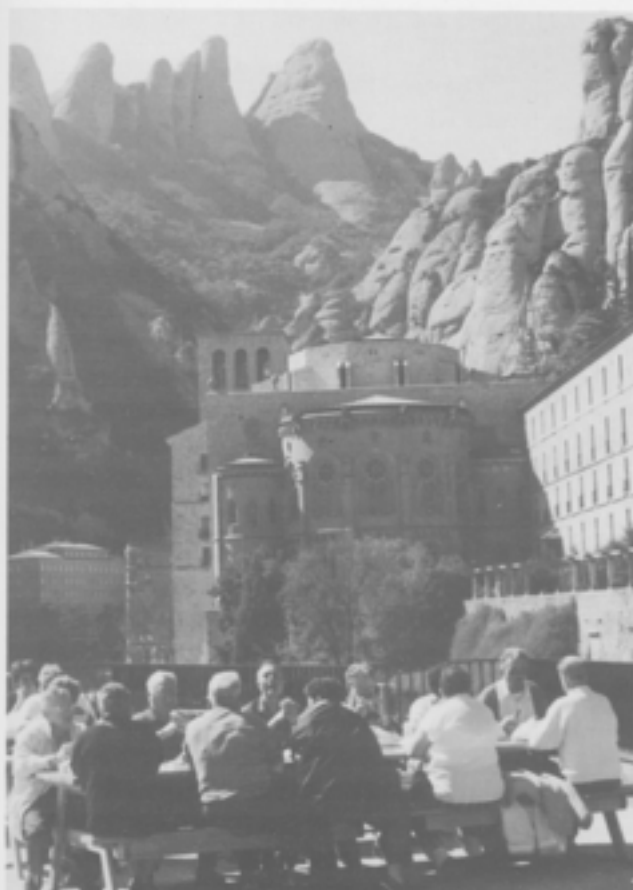
We approached Montserrat from the rear, that is to say the back side - well, we're sure you understand where we were coming from! This is where Rafael started to earn his *la propina* - see later. To climb this mountain by road you have first to experience a number of hairpin bends but the higher you climb the more magnificent the view. Very shortly we were confronted with the massive structures of the monastery and accompanying buildings perched precariously on the side of the mountain. Prior to disembarking, Ann

explained she would obtain our tickets for the funicular as we had all agreed we wanted to visit the summit. Meeting in the main square five minutes or so later, Anne returned with grave news. There was no funicular running on the day so there was only one decision for us to take. As your intrepid correspondents we put our best feet forward and commenced the ascent to *Sant Jeromi* (the hermitage near the summit). Whilst we set off on our little expedition, accompanied by John Trehwella, the majority of the party chose to visit The Sanctuary of Our Lady of Montserrat which included Philip's basilica and the Museum.

Montserrat is a mass of sandstone and conglomerate rock with a serrated spine rising to some 4,000 feet (1,220 meters) above the plain. The views are breathtaking where you can look north to the snow-capped Pyrenees and south (sic) to the Mediterranean.

We walked a path of red shale absorbing the sights and sounds as monks and hermits must have done before us. We found seats cut out of the rock overlooking the plain; you can appreciate the reasons for wanting to live on a mountain that was, and still is, very much alive with nature. Can it be possible for man to climb any closer to God? To be surrounded by so much beauty; butterflies coloured pale blue and white and others of fluorescent yellow and green; violets and miniature daffodils being a sign that spring has finally sprung.

Unfortunately, because the funicular railway was not running, neither was there any refreshment facilities open when we reached the top. You can imagine by the time we had started our descent, having caught up with Brian and Gaye Keeps, we were desperate for food and water. Thankfully, there were a number of restaurants/snack bars to choose



*Above: Lunch at Montserrat in the Courtyard; Below:
Setting back down from the peak on a lovely day*



*Above: Mike Burgess and John Trehwella on top
of Montserrat; Below: Mike and Rafael Heredia*



from. Over an asparagus and artichoke salad Joyce Trehwella told us about her morning where she had enjoyed listening to the boys' choir known as La Escolania sing the "Virolai" in the basilica. Later, June Wong said how she had found the whole experience moving, not only because of the beautiful singing but also because the whole congregation was invited to join together in the Lord's Prayer, spoken that day in several languages, drawing you in and making you feel part of the moment. The proceedings were overlooked by the image of *La Mare de Deu* (the Mother of God) from a chamber above the high altar, her face blackened by the smoke of millions of candles over the centuries, she has become affectionately known as *La Morenita* (the Dark One).

La Morenita is said to have been made by Saint Luke and brought to the area by Saint Peter. When the Moors invaded in the eighth century she was hidden in what is now called the Santa Cova (Holy Cave) and when discovered there in AD880 she refused to be moved. A shrine and chapel were built and nuns guarded her until AD976 when a Benedictine monastery was first established. A multitude of miracles were attributed to this Virgin and many rulers and notables made the pilgrimage to her. Nowadays she receives more tourists than pilgrims although many Catalan baby girls are still christened Montserrat and couples go to receive her blessing on their marriage.

After enjoying our light lunch and due to time constraints, we decided to make use of our tickets for the Museum and viewed a valuable collection of paintings, sculpture, archaeological artefacts and gold and silver work. Next, on to the basilica. The steps leading to the chamber of *La Morenita* were decorated with fine mosaic work and stained glass windows the colours of a rainbow. The steps begin to narrow and you are blinded by the walls of silver that surround her. As you turn, you are

immediately absorbed by the magnificence of the colours and gilt decorating the interior of the basilica itself.

Leaving the basilica via an outside courtyard where we had just enough time to light a candle and place it amongst many others before returning to our rendezvous with Rafael and his bus. We had experienced a "taste" of Montserrat and felt the need to return.

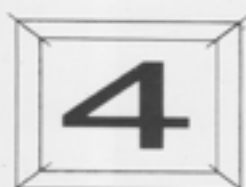
We descended - yet more hairpin bends leading down the other side through the village of Montserrat and onto Manresa whereupon twenty-one eager shoppers were looking forward to finding a few bargains in Pryca the super supermarket. Our numbers had increased to include Rafael who was looking to buy a mountain bike for one of his family. Almost without exception, everybody seemed to be happy with their purchases, many having more than they intended.

The journey home took us via the *Tunel del Cadi* with thoughts of supper and the satisfaction that someone else was driving. We could all relax and enjoy the mountain views washed with the rays of the setting sun. As we watched the bats circling in the sky against the form of the crescent moon we arrived at *La Muga* restaurant.

Drinks were served and with everyone having been reminded earlier of what they had pre-ordered, the party took their places at a long table. To the amusement of all, the tuna salad ordered by Sarah was large enough to serve half the party, and this was only the starter.

We should not have been surprised at the quantity of food offered after spending most of the day in religious surroundings. When the trout was served, not one but two fishes appeared! Bread and wine was also plentiful. A convivial evening was had by all.

In the words of Simon and Garfunkel, we were "Homeward Bound". We all contributed to *la propina* for Rafael for his care and courtesy in conveying us safely throughout a most enjoyable day. And lastly, but by no means least, many thanks were expressed to Ann for all her hard work in organising such a successful trip. □



INGLETES

CONFIGURACIÓ CREATIVA
POSTERS, FRAMES,
GRAPHIC WORK, ORIGINALS

Av. Meritxell, 9 (GALERIES MERITXELL)
Telèfon: 376 / 86 91 19 - ANDORRA

A graphic on the left side of the advertisement. It features a stylized world map with white outlines of continents on a grey background. A rectangular box is positioned in the upper left, containing the text 'MERRILL LYNCH' and 'PRINCIPLES' separated by two horizontal lines, each with a small black square in the center. Radiating lines emanate from the right side of this box, spreading across the map. Below the box, five principles are listed in bold, capital letters, arranged vertically: 'CLIENT FOCUS', 'RESPECT FOR THE INDIVIDUAL', 'TEAMWORK', 'RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP', and 'INTEGRITY'.

MERRILL LYNCH

PRINCIPLES

CLIENT FOCUS

**RESPECT FOR
THE INDIVIDUAL**

TEAMWORK

**RESPONSIBLE
CITIZENSHIP**

INTEGRITY

**A COMMITMENT TO
A SET OF PRINCIPLES
AND THE DIFFERENCE
IT MAKES**

These principles are the beliefs that define the way we conduct our business.

It is our commitment to them that guides every one of our actions and is at the heart of all the advice we provide – in 45 countries around the world.

Our reputation as a company that lives by its principles is important to us.

So much so that while our clients include more countries, companies, institutions and individuals than any other financial firm, we do not judge ourselves solely by the numbers.

But how we live up to our principles.

We believe that for our clients it makes a difference.

The difference is Merrill Lynch.



Merrill Lynch

A tradition of trust.

*For more information about our private
banking opportunities, please call our
London Office, 44-171-867-6518.*



CISA



CONSTRUCCIÓ IMMOBILIÀRIA, S.A.
Edifici La Cabanota - P.B.
LA MASSANA (Principat d'Andorra)
Tels.: 83 52 28 - 83 50 55
Tèlex: ANDOCISA 292 AND
Fax: 83 50 35

CISA — The People for Property in Andorra

